

- #30 The Mouse Island Marathon
- #31 The Mysterious Cheese Thief Christmas Catastrophe
- #32 Valley of the Giant Skeletons
- #33 Geronimo and the Gold Medal Mystery
- #34 Geronimo Stilton, Secret Agent
- #35 A Very Merry Christmas
- #36 Geronimo's Valentine
- #37 The Race Across America
- #38 A Fabumouse School Adventure
- #39 Singing Sensation
- #40 The Karate Mouse
- #41 Mighty Mount Kilimanjaro
- #42 The Peculiar Pumpkin Thief
- #43 I'm Not a Supermouse!
- #44 The Giant Diamond Robbery
- #45 Save the White Whale!
- #46 The Haunted Castle
- #47 Run for the Hills, Geronimo!
- #48 The Mystery in Venice
- #49 The Way of the Samurai
- #50 This Hotel Is Haunted!
- #51 The Enormouse Pearl Heist
- #52 Mouse in Space!
- #53 Rumble in the Jungle
- #54 Get into Gear, Stilton!
- #55 The Golden Statue Plot
- #56 Flight of the Red Bandit
- #57 The Stinky Cheese Vacation
- #58 The Super Chef Contest
- #59 Welcome to Moldy Manor
- #60 The Treasure of Easter Island
- #61 Mouse House Hunter
- #62 Mouse Overboard!
- #63 The Cheese Experiment
- #64 Magical Mission
- #65 Bollywood Burglary
- #66 Operation: Secret Recipe
- #67 The Chocolate Chase
- #68 Cyber-Thief Showdown
- #69 Hug a Tree, Geronimo
- #70 The Phantom Bandit
- #71 Geronimo on Ice!
- #72 The Hawaiian Heist
- #73 The Missing Movie
- #74 Happy Birthday, Geronimo!
- #75 The Sticky Situation
- #76 Superstore Surprise
- #77 The Last Resort Oasis
- #78 Mysterious Eye of the Dragon
- #79 Garbage Dump Disaster
- #80 Have a Heart, Geronimo
- #81 The Super Cup Face-Off
- #82 Mouse VS Wild
- #83 Treasures of the Maya
- #84 Blast from the Past
- #85 The Legend of Chocolate Hills



Don't miss any of these exciting Thea Sisters adventures!



Thea Stilton and the Dragon's Code



Thea Stilton and the Mountain of Fire



Thea Stilton and the Ghost of the Shipwreck



Thea Stilton and the Secret City



Thea Stilton and the Mystery in Paris



Thea Stilton and the Cherry Blossom Adventure



Thea Stilton and the Star Castaways



Thea Stilton: Big Trouble in the Big Apple



Thea Stilton and the Ice Treasure



Thea Stilton and the Secret of the Old Castle



Thea Stilton and the Blue Scarab Hunt



Thea Stilton and the Prince's Emerald



Thea Stilton and the Mystery on the Orient Express



Thea Stilton and the Dancing Shadows



Thea Stilton and the Legend of the Fire Flowers



Thea Stilton and the Spanish Dance Mission



Thea Stilton and the Journey to the Lion's Den



Thea Stilton and the Great Telly Heist



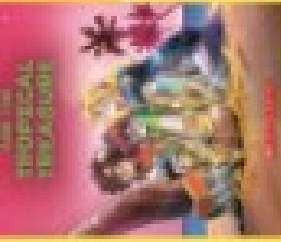
Thea Stilton and the Chocolate Sabotage



Thea Stilton and the Missing Myth



Thea Stilton and the
Lost Letters



Thea Stilton and the
Tropical Treasure



Thea Stilton and the
Hollywood Hoax



Thea Stilton and the
Madagascar Madness



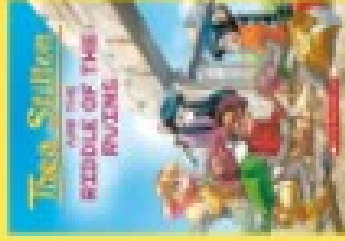
Thea Stilton and the
Frozen Fiasco



Thea Stilton and the
Venice Masquerade



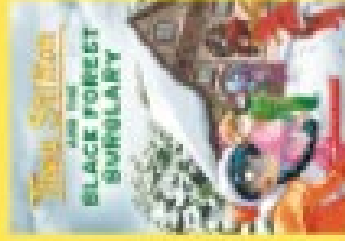
Thea Stilton and the
Niagara Splash



Thea Stilton and the
Riddle of the Ruins



Thea Stilton and the
Phantom of the Orchestra



Thea Stilton and the
Black Forest Burglary



Thea Stilton and the
Race for Gold



Thea Stilton and the
Rainforest Rescue



Thea Stilton and the
American Dream



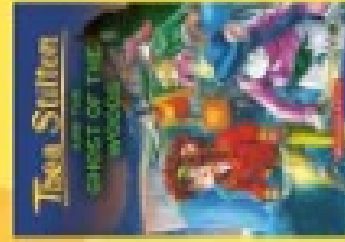
Thea Stilton and the
Roman Holiday



Thea Stilton and the
Fiesta in Mexico



Thea Stilton and the
Case of the Stage



Thea Stilton and the
Ghost of the Woods



Thea Stilton and the
Search for the Secret Garden



Thea Stilton and the
Blue Island Thief

Thea Stilton

AND THE BLUE ISLAND THIEF





HELLO, I'M THEA!

I'm *Geronimo Stilton's* sister.

As I'm sure you know from my brother's bestselling novels, I'm a special correspondent for *The Rodent's Gazette*, Mouse Island's most famous newspaper. Unlike my 'fraidy mouse brother, I absolutely adore traveling, having adventures, and meeting rodents from all around the world!

The adventure I want to tell you about begins at Mouseford Academy, the school I went to when I was a young mouseling. I had such a great experience there as a student that I came back to teach a journalism class.

When I returned as a grown mouse, I met five really special students: Colette, Nicky, Pamela, Paulina, and Violet. You could hardly imagine five more different mouselings, but they became great friends right away. And they liked me so much that they decided to name their group after me: the Thea Sisters! I was so touched by that, I decided to write about their adventures. So turn the page to read a fabumouse adventure about the

THEA SISTERS!



colette

She has a passion for clothing and style, especially anything pink. When she grows up, she wants to be a fashion editor.



violet

She's the bookworm of the group, and she loves learning. She enjoys classical music and dreams of becoming a famous violinist.



paulina

Cheerful and kind, she loves traveling and meeting rodents from all over the world. She has a magic touch when it comes to technology.



Nicky

She comes from Australia and is very enthusiastic about sports and nature. She loves being outside and is always ready to get up and go!



pamela

She is a great mechanic: Give her a screwdriver and she'll fix anything! She loves pizza, which she eats every day, and she loves to cook.

THE THEA SISTERS

CLUE

DO YOU WANT TO
HELP THE THEA SISTERS IN
THIS NEW ADVENTURE? IT'S NOT
HARD — JUST FOLLOW THE CLUES!

WHEN YOU SEE THIS MAGNIFYING GLASS,
PAY ATTENTION: IT MEANS THERE'S AN
IMPORTANT CLUE ON THE PAGE. EACH TIME
ONE APPEARS, WE'LL REVIEW THE CLUES
SO WE DON'T MISS ANYTHING.

**ARE YOU READY? A NEW
MYSTERY AWAITS!**

Thea Stilton

THE BLUE ISLAND THIEF



Copyright © 2021 by Mondadori Libri S.p.A. for PIEMME, Italy.

The publisher does not have any control over and does not assume any responsibility for author or third-party websites or their content.

The moral right of the author has been asserted. Based on an original idea by Elisabetta Dami.

THEA STILTON © 2026 All rights reserved.

geronimostilton.com

Published by Scholastic Inc., *Publishers since 1920*, 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. SCHOLASTIC and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

Stilton is the name of a famous English cheese. It is a registered trademark of the Stilton Cheese Makers' Association.

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be reproduced, transmitted, downloaded, decompiled, reverse engineered, used to train any artificial intelligence technologies, or stored in or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereafter invented, without the express written permission of the publisher. For information regarding permission, please contact: info@teasisters.com.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

e-ISBN 979-8-225-02785-8

Text by Thea Stilton

Original title: *Il Ladro Dell Isola Blu*

Cover by Caterina Giorgetti and Viola Massarenti

Illustrations by Barbara Pellizzari and Flavio Ferron

Graphic designer Laura Dal Maso/theWorldofDOT

Special thanks to Shannon Decker

Translated by Emily Clement

Interior design by Becky James

First printing 2026



The busy Italian marina was packed with boats of all sizes. Turquoise waves **SPARKLED** in the afternoon sun.

Squinting in the sunshine, Nicky took a deep breath of the salty sea air. “How marvemouse!”

“You’re right! **NAPLES** is stunning,” Colette agreed, peering at the ancient stone structures towering over the port of Santa Lucia.

“I think that’s Castel dell’Ovo, the oldest **FORTRESS** in the city.” Paulina pointed with one paw, flipping through the guide to Naples on her tablet with the other. “And that mountain over there must be —”

“Let me guess: **MOUNT VESUVIUS**, the famouse volcano?” Nicky cut in. “It’s breathtaking!”

“You know what’s truly breathtaking? This **FRIED PIZZA!**” Pamela said with a grin, taking another bite out of a large slice.

“Hey, when did you get that?” Colette asked in surprise.

“A few minutes ago, at that kiosk over there,” Pamela replied, pointing to a small stand selling local **FOOD**. “You were all busy

chatting and reading the guide, but I was starting to feel a little hungry.”

“You couldn’t resist, huh?” Nicky guessed with a smile.

“Well, I’m not the one who’s competing in a **REGATTA** in Capri in three days. I’m not missing out on all this great food!” Pamela answered with a wink.



"Speaking of which, do you feel ready for the competition, Nicky?" asked Violet.

Her friend nodded firmly. "It will be a challenging race, but I'm in good shape! I've been training for months. And I have a special advantage — none of the other competitors are being cheered on by the four best **friends** in the world!"

"Of course we'll be there for you," Pamela said, hugging her. "Mice will be able to hear our cheers all over Capri!"

"All of Italy will hear our squeaks!" Violet added.

"Hey, is it just me, or is our ride to the island running **late**?" Colette asked, squinting into the distance.

Nicky nodded and looked at the time on her phone. "It should have been here ten minutes ago, but hopefully it arrives soon? Simona,

the mouse who runs our hotel, sent me very detailed **instructions**. She said that we should wait here, and one of her employees would pick us up on a small boat to take us to *Hotel Villa Blue*."

"What's the hotel like? Does it have an ocean view?" Colette asked.

Nicky shrugged. "I don't know! Everything was booked by the organization that runs the regatta, and I didn't see any photos. I'm sure it will be beautiful. Everything in this city is!"

"I guess all we can do is wait," Pamela concluded. "For now, I just see **sailboats**."

Just then a wooden boat with large white sails slowly glided up to the dock. A smiling young mouse was at the helm.

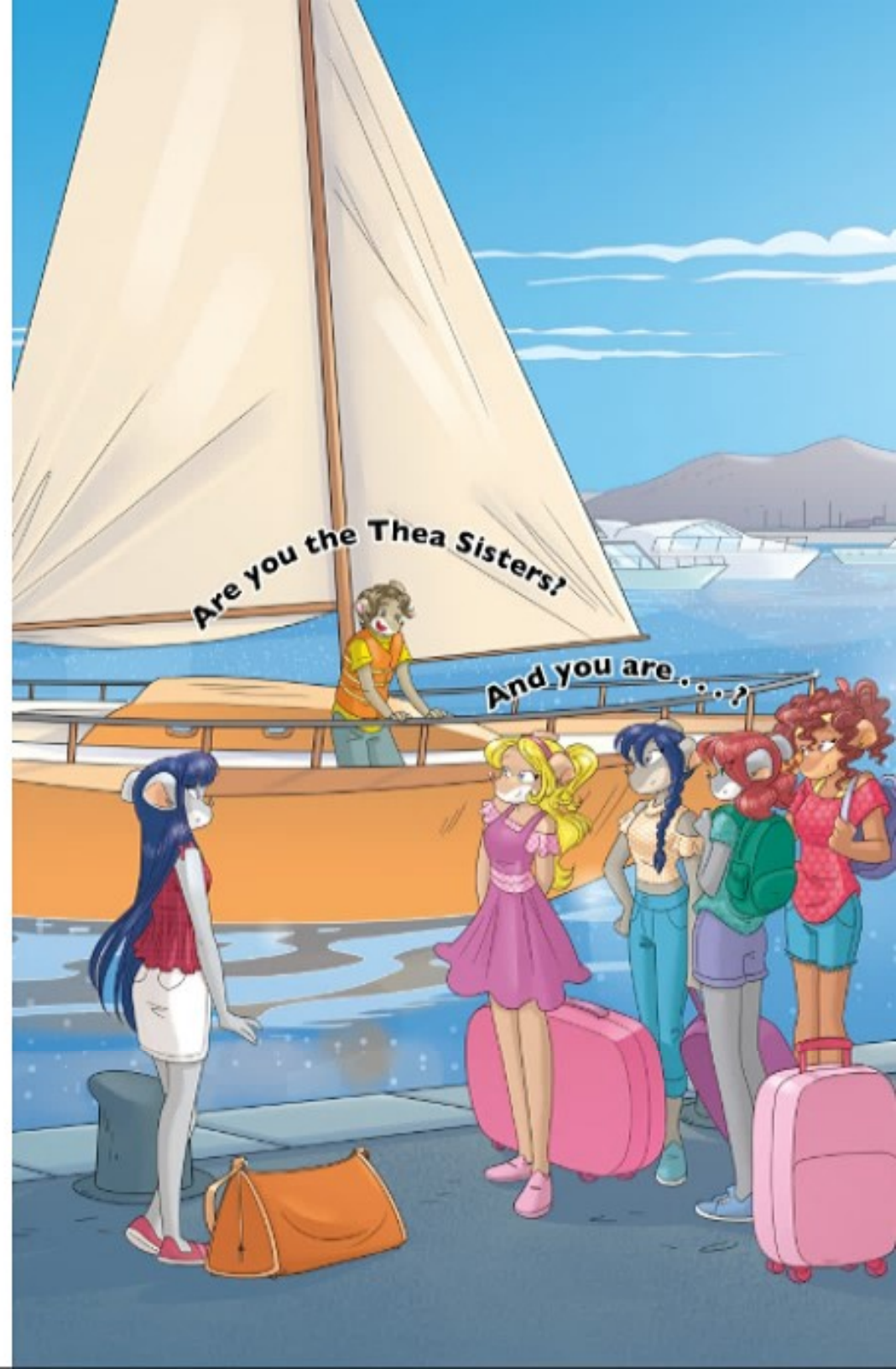
"Are you the **THEA SISTERS**?" he called out.

The five sisters looked at one another in surprise.

WELCOME ABOARD!

"Yes, that's us," Nicky replied. "And you are . . . ?"

"Your **RIDE** to Hotel Villa Blue," he replied. "Welcome aboard!"



SAILING ACROSS THE WAVES

After docking the boat, the young mouse introduced himself. "Nice to meet you all! I'm Amerigo, and this is the *Naiad*!"

"Who?" Paulina asked, looking around in **confusion**.

"My sailboat!" Amerigo said, waving a paw. "Please take off your shoes before coming aboard. The *Naiad* is very delicate! Let's also try to be careful with your bags."



PAMELA

"Don't worry, I travel light — just a **BACKPACK!**" said Pamela, slipping off her shoes and stepping aboard.

"Mousetastic! That's the spirit of a true traveler," Amerigo said.

Paulina, Nicky, and Violet were next to carry their **light** bags on board. Colette hesitated on the dock.

"Come on, it's your turn!" Amerigo said, extending a paw. "If you're concerned about seasickness, don't **worry** — today the water is as flat as a slice of American cheese."

"Actually," Colette murmured, glancing between the boat and her heavy luggage, "I'm not sure what to do about my bags. I have three of them, and . . . they're a little **LARGE!**"

A serious look came over Amerigo's snout. "Don't worry about that. If they're too heavy,



PAULINA AND
VIOLET



NICKY



COLETTE

we'll just toss one or two of them into the **sea**."

"Holey cheese!" Colette spluttered. "You're going to throw my bags into the water?"

Amerigo burst out laughing. "I was just joking — I'd never dream of **contaminating** this beautiful water! Come on, pass me the first bag."

With Amerigo's help, all of Colette's bags made it safely on board and were stowed carefully. Once the five **friends** were settled, the skipper* explained all about the sails.

"The conditions are excellent for sailing. We should be at our destination in a few hours," he declared. "Now, enjoy the **BREEZE** . . ."

Colette pulled five pairs of sunglasses, five hats, and a tube of sunscreen out of her purse and pawed them out to her friends.

* In nautical terms, the skipper is the person or mouse who drives the boat.

"Now I see why you have so many bags," Amerigo said with a smile. "And why everyone else can travel so light!"

"I have to admit, Coco," Paulina said as she squeezed the tube of **SUNSCREEN**, "you always have exactly what we need!"

"I don't travel light like you," Colette said with a wink. "But I'm ready for anything!"

The Thea Sisters all kicked up their paws, relaxed, and enjoyed sailing under a bright sky dotted with puffy white **clouds**.

"Do you always transport the guests to Villa Blue?" Nicky asked Amerigo.

"No, it depends on the weather and on my other responsibilities," he said. "I **teach** at a sailing school in Capri. But I happily offer my services to Simona's hotel when I can!"

"Then we're truly lucky," Colette beamed. "And very pleasantly surprised. We didn't



know we'd be taking such a **special** journey!"

"Plus, it seems like we have some unexpected travel companions," Amerigo added, pointing into the distance. "Look!"

"**Dolphins!**" cried Pamela, leaping to her paws.

A series of shining fins emerged from the waves, and a group of lively dolphins jumped **happily** around the boat.

"It's like they're **playing** with us!" Paulina

squeaked happily, pulling out her tablet to take pictures.

Amerigo nodded. "They like to give our new arrivals a warm welcome!"

The dolphins swam alongside the boat for a while, **leaping** and **splashing** joyfully. Then, all of a sudden, they plunged below the waves and disappeared.

"If this is just the beginning, our trip is going to be fabumouse!" Nicky cheered.

Little by little, the sun sank closer to the horizon. The sky began to turn a brilliant shade of orange.

"Look over there! That's **Capri**, isn't it?" asked Violet, pointing to a rocky shape ahead.

Amerigo nodded. "We're almost there. Is this your first time visiting the island?"

It was. The sisters could barely contain their excitement!



Look!

They're playing with us!

"It's a special place," Amerigo continued. "I'm sure you'll love it. Many famous **writers** and poets have been enchanted by the colorful landscape. So many incredible things have been written about it. Countless beautiful paintings have been painted."

"We can't wait to explore the island from top to bottom!" Nicky cried.

"I want to uncover all its most **beautiful** spots," added Colette with a dreamy sigh. "I cannot miss a single thing!"

Amerigo thought for a moment. "The sailing school is closed tomorrow. Would you like me to give you a **tour** of the island by boat?"

"That would be fantastic!" cried Pamela, clapping her paws. The others nodded enthusiastically.

"Then it's a plan," Amerigo said with a smile.

Just then Paulina shouted, "Land ho! We're here!"

Up ahead, Capri was ready to greet them,



AGLOW WITH THE
COLORS OF THE
SUNSET!

Capri

THE ISLAND OF CAPRI IS LOCATED IN THE GULF OF NAPLES. ITS STEEP, ROCKY COASTLINE IS FORMED OUT OF TALL CLIFFS AND NUMEROUS GROTTOES (SEA CAVES).



THE MOST FAMOUS ROCK FORMATIONS ARE CALLED THE FARAGLIONI ("SEA STACKS").

DUE TO THE BEAUTY OF THE SEA AND THE LANDSCAPE, CAPRI WAS KNOWN AS A VACATION DESTINATION EVEN IN ANCIENT ROMAN TIMES.

THE BLUE GROTTO

One of the most well-known sites in Capri is the Blue Grotto: a natural cave with a very low ceiling. Inside, the sunlight and water fill the cave with an extraordinary shade of blue light!

WELCOME TO CAPRI

The five friends stepped off the boat and took a look around. They were fascinated by the **rocky** island!

"I'll show you the way to the hotel. It's not far," said Amerigo, throwing the heaviest bags over his shoulders.

Pamela watched as he began to climb a steep **STAIRCASE** cut into the rocks. "Cheese and crackers, we have to climb all those?!" she cried.

"Looks like it! See up there?" Nicky pointed a paw.

At the very top of the stairs, facing the sea, stood a majestic building with a sign written in script: **Villa Blue**.

"That's our hotel?
Wow!" squeaked Paulina.
"It's incredible!"

"What a fabumouse
view!" Violet added.

"And most importantly,
it's **Pink**!!!" Colette
crowed, pointing to the
bougainvillea bushes that
adorned the walls. Her
friends burst into giggles.

"It's even more beautiful
than I imagined," Nicky said.

Pamela nudged her.



"The race organizers must have thought that a
future **CHAMPION** would need a super-special
place to stay!"

Amerigo had already reached the top of the
stairs. "Come along! I'm hoping to take the
Naiad back to port before it gets **dark**."

"Oops, sorry!" Colette replied, rushing to
climb the stairs with her friends.

A **charming** young mouse was waiting
at the top and greeted them warmly. "Ah, my
new guests. Welcome to Capri!"

"You must be Simona," Nicky said with a
smile, introducing all her friends.

After a moment, Amerigo waved good-bye
to the group. "I've done my **DUTY**, so now
I'll say good night." Winking, he added, "I'll
see you tomorrow morning!"

The Thea Sisters waved to Amerigo, then
followed the owner of Villa Blue to a pergola

covered in vines.
They sat around a cute
little *table*.

"I've made you a snack," Simona said, placing a pitcher of homemade lemonade on the table and motioning to a plate of fresh figs.

Welcome to Villa Blue!
How nice!



"Thank you for this delicious welcome!" Violet said.

"We really needed it," added Pamela, reaching for the *figs*. "I haven't had a bite to eat since that fried pizza!"

Simona chuckled. "Don't worry, dinner tonight will be worth the wait."

"If I know Pam, she won't be satisfied until she's tried every single *delicacy* in Capri," Paulina said, giggling.

"On the other paw, I can't wait to discover all of the island's hidden gems — not just the food!" Violet said.

"Speaking of which, it was a *marvemouse* idea to bring us here by sailboat," Colette told Simona.

"I'm so glad you enjoyed it," their host replied. "It's one of the little surprises that I like to plan for my guests. I find that gliding

across the waves with the wind in your fur is good for the soul, especially after a long journey. It's also the most **ECO-FRIENDLY** way to reach the island!"

"That's right," Nicky agreed with a smile.

Simona went on. "At Villa Blue, we have many environmentally friendly solutions. For example —"



"Simona! The **guests** for room twenty-seven have arrived," a male voice behind them suddenly called out.

The girls turned and saw a gentlemouse wearing an **elegant**, old-fashioned uniform.

"Thank you, Marco, I'll handle it," Simona replied. Turning back to the Thea Sisters, she said, "Girls, I must go. I leave you in

the excellent paws of my trusted *concierge*."^{*}

Marco gave a small **BOW**.

"I'll move your bags to your room," he said. "Take time to finish your snack and enjoy the sunset. Not many things are more beautiful than the **SUN** disappearing into the water around Capri!"

^{*} A concierge works at a hotel's reception desk.

A SPECIAL DINNER

Villa Blue had a unique, old-fashioned **charm**.

The view from the girls' room, gazing out over the sea, was a dream. Simona's warm welcome, Marco's kindness, and their attention to detail had made the five friends feel right at home.

Ring! Ring! Ring!

phone call!



"Phone call!" shouted Violet, who was washing her paws in one of the suite's two bathrooms.

Nicky's arms were full of clothes. "I can't get it! Coco, can you?"

"I'm in the shower!" Colette called from the other bathroom.

"Paulina, can you?"

Ring!

I can't!



"Oh no! I'm typing in the codes for an update on my tablet, and if I stop now, I'll have to start all

over again," Paulina said. "Pam, can you do it?"

Ring!

"H-hello?" Pamela stammered, holding the room's old telephone to her ear.

In her other paw was a piece of chocolate from the box

that had been waiting in their room.

"Yes, of course," she said into the receiver. "We'll be ready in the twitch of a whisker!"

Hello?



Can you?



Oh no!



“Who was it?” asked Paulina, looking up from her screen.

“Simona. She said **dinner** will be ready for us on the terrace in the east wing,” Pamela explained. “She thought a special menu would be a nice welcome!”

“How much time do we have to get ready?” Colette asked, peeking out from behind the **BATHROOM** door, her fur still wet from the shower.

“About two minutes!” her friend replied.

“What?!” Colette squeaked. “But I still need to exfoliate, moisturize, dry my hair, style it, get dressed, and —”

Pamela interrupted. “If you want, I can lend you my **TRACKSUIT** so you don’t have to waste time thinking about what to wear!”

Nicky burst out laughing. “I think Coco would rather miss the appetizers than have

dinner on a terrace in Capri wearing a tracksuit!”

The girls got dressed as quickly as they could. A few minutes later, they reached the terrace. Simona was waiting for them.

“What’s that delicious smell?” Paulina asked.

“Let me guess — if my nose is correct, it’s **PIZZA**!” Pamela cried happily. “Homemade pizza, cooked in a wood-fired oven?”

“You guessed it!” Simona confirmed with a smile. “I didn’t realize you were an expert.”

“My parents have a **pizzeria** in New York,” Pamela explained. “When they find out that I’ve tasted real Neapolitan pizza in Italy, they’ll be so jealous!”

Just then the waiter arrived with their first course. “There’s something for everyone,” Simona explained. “We have Margherita with buffalo mozzarella and tomatoes, Diavola

with spicy salami, Parmigiana with eggplant, Quattro Stagioni with mushrooms, olives, artichokes, and tomatoes . . . ”

“I call a piece of each one!” cried Pamela, eyes sparkling.

“This is **delicious**,” Violet said a moment later, biting into a piece of Margherita pizza.



“I’m glad you like it!” Simona said. “My father was the one who wanted the wood-fired oven, so we could offer our guests true Neapolitan pizza. That way, anyone who spends time at Villa Blue can try the island’s **authentic** cuisine. Now that he’s no longer here, I try to follow his example.”

“Did he leave the hotel to you?” asked Violet.

Simona nodded. “At first, I wasn’t sure I wanted to take it. There was so much to do, and I didn’t have any experience. But soon I realized that my **MISSION** would be to keep Villa Blue going!”

“And you’re doing a truly mousetastic job, Miss Simona!” Marco added, approaching the table. He turned to the Thea Sisters. “She has done extraordinary work here at the hotel. Little by little, she has incorporated many **ECO-FRIENDLY** solutions that her father never would have thought of.”

The Thea Sisters looked curious, so Simona explained further. “I installed solar panels for electricity and hot water, increased recycling, banned single-use plastic objects as much as possible, and decided to serve only seasonal

products from our region in the restaurant.”

“Wow, that’s incredible!” Nicky cried, impressed.

“Thank you. It’s been wonderful, even though sometimes it’s **DIFFICULT**, too. The accounts don’t always add up,” Simona replied, momentarily sad. “Anyway, I do what I can, and Marco always lends me a paw.”

“Well, I can confidently say that your pizza must be the best in Capri,” Pamela commented with a **smile**, showing her empty plate. “I’m ready for a second round!”

“Pam is a big eater.” Violet giggled.

“I love it!” Simona said. “I’ll leave you to it. Please enjoy the evening, and tomorrow morning —”

Woof, woof, woof!

Barking rang through the air. The Thea Sisters looked down and saw that a tiny

Pekingese dog with a red collar had appeared at Nicky's paws.

"Ruffy! Come to Mommy!" an elegant rodent squealed, walking up and scooping the animal into her arms.

"Countess Mousina, welcome! Would you like some pizza?" Simona asked, inviting the woman to the table.



The **countess** wrinkled her nose. "Pizza? That doesn't agree with Ruffy. Do you have any oysters?"

Simona looked thoughtful. "No, but tonight's menu does include a fresh shrimp salad."

The countess sighed. "That will have to do. Ruffy, **little love**, let's get you into your carrier." She turned to Marco.

"His personalized dog dish is in here. Fill it with your finest shrimp!"

The Thea Sisters shared an amused look. "What were you just saying, Simona?" Colette asked.

"Oh, right! Tomorrow morning, **breakfast** will be ready here on the terrace," Simona said. "But I'll bring Nicky's straight to your room, since you won't have much time before regatta practice."

"**Simona, you're the best!**" Nicky replied, hugging her new friend.



The next morning, Nicky woke up right on time to a waiter delivering her **breakfast**. After that energy boost, she headed to the bay for her first **REGATTA** practice session. The schedule included two days of practice, followed by a free day before the competition.

The other Thea Sisters woke up, ate a hearty breakfast on the **terrace**, and stayed there to relax. They watched for the white sails of Amerigo's boat to appear on the horizon, since he had promised to show them the wonders of Capri.

"Remind me to **thank** Nicky later," Paulina said, stretching out on a deck chair. "Without her competition, we never would have

discovered this incredible place."

"Look, there's the *Naiad*!" Colette shouted, pointing to the boat headed their way. "Hurry up, we don't want to make Amerigo wait."

A few minutes later, the four friends boarded the **sailboat**. They were ready to explore the island!

"Good morning, girls!" Amerigo greeted them. "Are you ready for an unforgettable trip?"

"We can't wait!" cried Colette.

"Fabumouse! I hope you brought your **bathing suits** — you're going to need them!" Amerigo added.

Then he turned the wheel and the boat set off, gliding peacefully through the **water** around the island.

The four friends enjoyed the breathtaking view! Only a few minutes had passed when,

before their eyes, gigantic rock formations appeared. It seemed as if they had risen from the depths of the sea, standing against the intense blue sky.

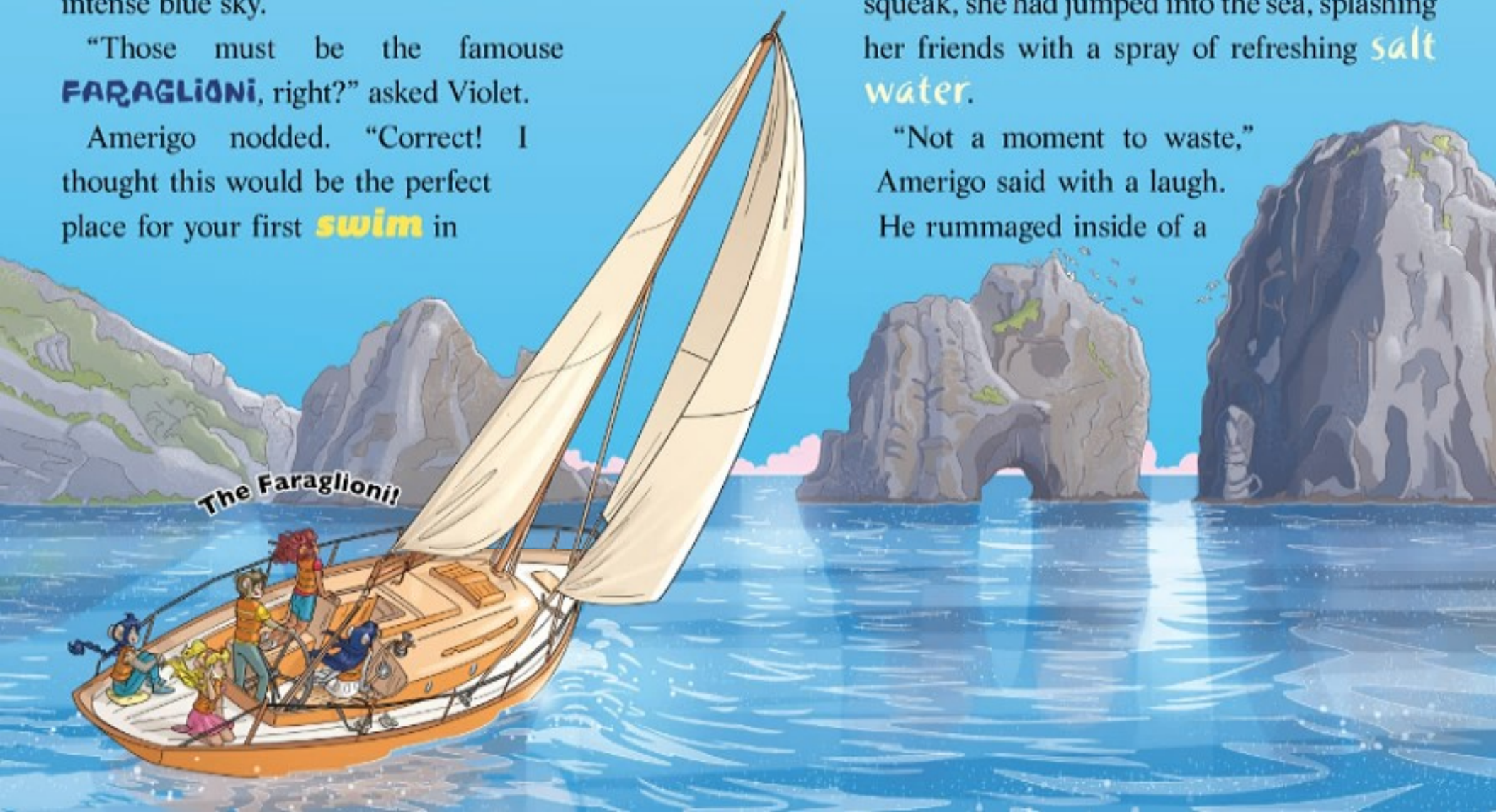
"Those must be the famous **FARAGLIONI**, right?" asked Violet.

Amerigo nodded. "Correct! I thought this would be the perfect place for your first **swim** in

the Gulf of Naples. What do you say?"

"I say . . . last one in the water is the stinky cheese!" cried Pamela. Before anyone could squeak, she had jumped into the sea, splashing her friends with a spray of refreshing **salt water**.

"Not a moment to waste," Amerigo said with a laugh. He rummaged inside of a



wooden box near the rudder, pulled out a swim mask, and tossed it to Pamela. "Try that, the bottom of the sea is worth a look!"

One by one, the other friends jumped into the **sparkling** water, too.

"It feels like we're in a postcard," Paulina said with a sigh, floating on her back next to the boat.

"Wow, the water is so clear that you can see **COLORS** all the way down to the bottom!" Pamela said in awe.

After a while, Amerigo squeaked up. "How about we climb back on board and head out for our next stop? There are so many places I'd like to show you!"

The Thea Sisters agreed with a cheer. They got back on the boat and lay in the **sunshine** to dry as the *Naiad* set off again.

As he steered, Amerigo pointed out the

most picturesque spots along the coast. He told the friends about the history of Capri, its legends, and the great **artists** who had visited the island over the centuries.

The girls listened, fascinated.

"Now I know why tourists from all over the world come here. It's a truly magical place!" Colette commented with a dreamy sigh.

"Speaking of magical places, we've reached one of the most famous spots in Capri: the **Blue Grotto!**" Amerigo said. "But this time, the *Naiad* can't take you there."

"What do you mean? We have to stay here?" Colette asked, confused.

Amerigo burst out laughing. "No, no! It's just that the *Naiad* is far too **BIG** to enter the grotto. You'll have to use that!" He pointed a paw.

The girls looked to where their friend was

pointing and saw a small **rowboat** heading in their direction.

“Go on! I’ll see you again afterward,” Amerigo said.

Chattering with **excitement**, the Thea Sisters transferred into the small boat.

“I’m kind of glad Nicky isn’t here! With her fear of small spaces, she wouldn’t like this,” Paulina said as the boat headed for the **mouth** of the cave. “I think that —”

But before she could continue, a spectacular sight appeared before their eyes.

Inside the low-ceilinged grotto, the water sparkled, reflecting an intense **SAPPHIRE** color onto the walls of the cave.

“Now I understand why it’s called the Blue Grotto,” Violet whispered, enchanted.

After a moment of hesitation, Colette added, “Girls, I have to admit, for the first time in my life, I’m **seriously** doubting myself.”



“Why, Coco?” Paulina asked.

“Seeing these heavenly blue reflections, I’m not sure if my favorite color is still **Pink!**” Colette confessed.

A STRANGE ENCOUNTER

After leaving the Blue Grotto, the Thea Sisters’ boat trip lasted a few more hours. The sisters soaked up every moment. Between all the laughter, the breathtaking views, and swimming in the sparkling sea, time passed in a flash. Soon, it was time for the friends to say **farewell** to Amerigo. In the late afternoon, he docked the *Naiad* at Marina Grande* and helped the four girls disembark.

“Nicky sent us a **message**,” Paulina said, checking her phone. “Amerigo, can you tell us how to get to the town square?”



* Marina Grande is the main port town of Capri.

"Of course! It's just four minutes away on the funicular," Amerigo said. "The station is back there."

Before they left, Colette **hugged** their new friend. "Thank you for today. It was marvemouse!"

"I had fun, too," he replied. "Do you want to come for a sailing lesson tomorrow?"

"Of course!" Colette agreed enthusiastically. She and her friends headed toward the **FUNICULAR**, a hillside tram that would quickly take them up to the town square. From there, they could see a breathtaking sight: the green landscape contrasted with the white houses and the blue sea.

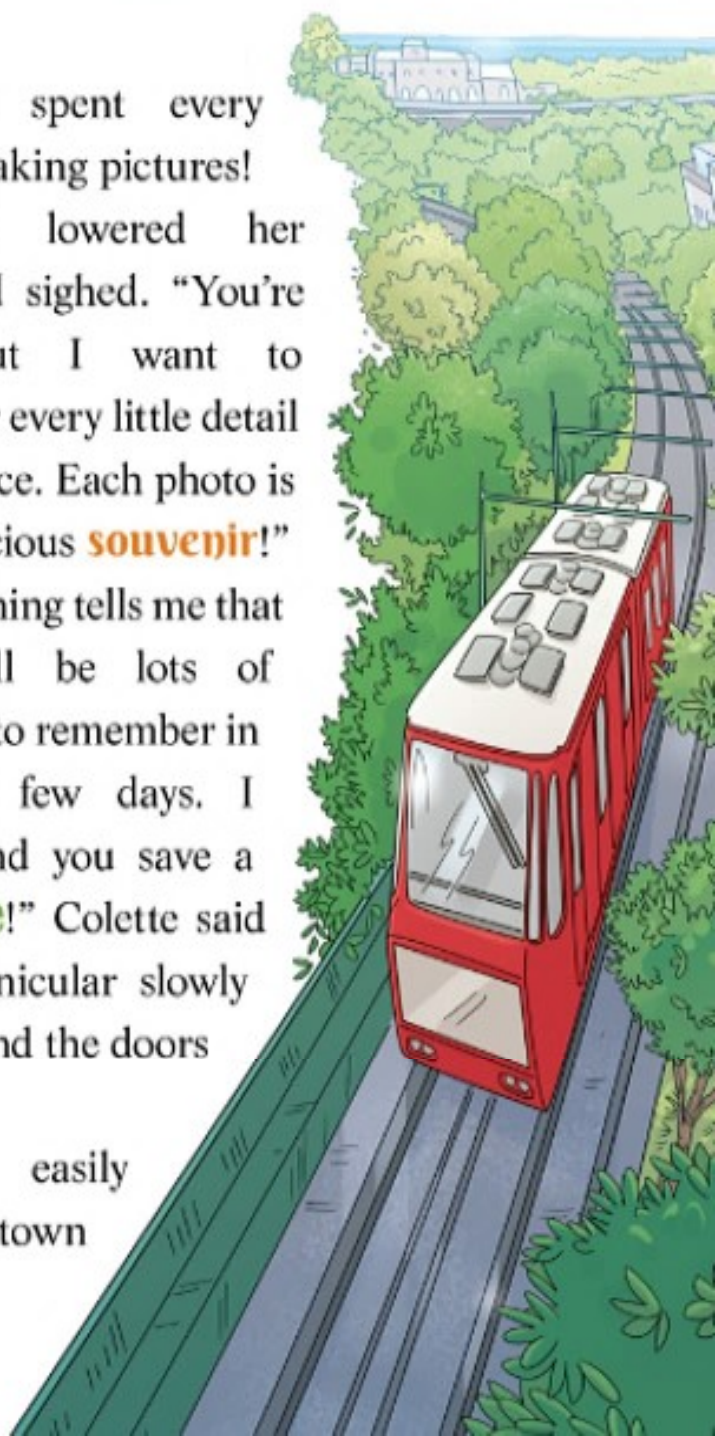
"Holey cheese, if you take any more **PHOTOS**, your tablet is going to run out of space!" Pamela giggled, patting Paulina on the shoulder. Since they'd boarded the tram,

she had spent every moment taking pictures!

Paulina lowered her tablet and sighed. "You're right, but I want to remember every little detail of this place. Each photo is like a precious **souvenir**!"

"Something tells me that there will be lots of moments to remember in the next few days. I recommend you save a little **space**!" Colette said as the funicular slowly stopped and the doors opened.

They easily found the town



square. It seemed like all the passersby were headed to the same place, which was buzzing with a **cheerful** commotion.

"Girls!" Nicky called out, waving from one of the tables crowding the area.

"There's our champion! Please tell me you've already ordered **ice cream** for everyone," said Pamela, taking a seat with the others.

Nicky shook her head. "There are so many flavors that I couldn't even decide what I wanted!"

"How was practice?" asked Violet.

"Good, but the competition is as tough as aged Parmesan,"

Nicky said. "The local contestant, Rosa, is **SUPER FAST!**"

Colette gave her friend a



Rosa

hug. "I'm sure she's thinking the same thing about you!"

"Is this young lady participating in the international regatta?" a male voice said.

Turning to the table next to them, the girls saw a striking middle-aged **couple** sipping on lemonade.

"Pardon us for interrupting," the woman added with a smile. "Our hotel, Top Luxury, is one of the competition sponsors. We're Giovanna and Antonio Rodente."

"Actually, I was just preparing for the race," Nicky confirmed in a **friendly** tone.

"Ah, good, then you must be competing against our fantastic champion, Rosa!" the man replied. "What part of the world are you from?"

"We're from Whale Island," Colette said. "We arrived yesterday and are staying at **Villa Blue** for —"

"Villa Blue?!" the owners of the Top Luxury Hotel squeaked, sharing a look.

"I'm sorry to hear that," Mr. Rodente said. "It's unfortunate that you're staying in such a **terrible** place!"

"It's a real rat trap!" Mrs. Rodente added.

The Thea Sisters tried to reply, but Mr. Rodente interrupted them again. "You seem very nice, and I don't want you to get a bad impression of our splendid island, staying in a **decrepit** hotel like that!"

"Treasure, why don't you invite them to our gala dinner tonight?" his wife suggested. "That way, they can see how it's done at a real hotel!"

"Why certainly, my dear, that's an excellent idea! Girls, we'll expect you this evening at eight thirty," he said, pawing the Thea Sisters five **invitations** he'd pulled from his shirt pocket.

"Actually, we —" Colette tried to say, but the mice were already getting up from their table.

"We must dash! Until tonight, girls!" Mrs. Rodente trilled before turning on her heel and leaving, holding her husband's arm.

The **GIRLS** looked at one another in shock.

"How can they call Villa Blue a decrepit hotel? It's a **fabumouse** place!" Colette protested.

Meanwhile, Violet examined the invitation that Mr. Rodente had given them. "There's a **MAP** on the back of the invitation. It looks like the Top Luxury Hotel is really close to Villa Blue. It won't take long to get there."

"But I don't want to go," Pamela said. "I like Simona's cooking. Plus, those two don't seem very **nice**!"

"I'm not sure we can avoid it," Paulina said



Villa Blue is a real rat trap!

To be honest...

We like it!

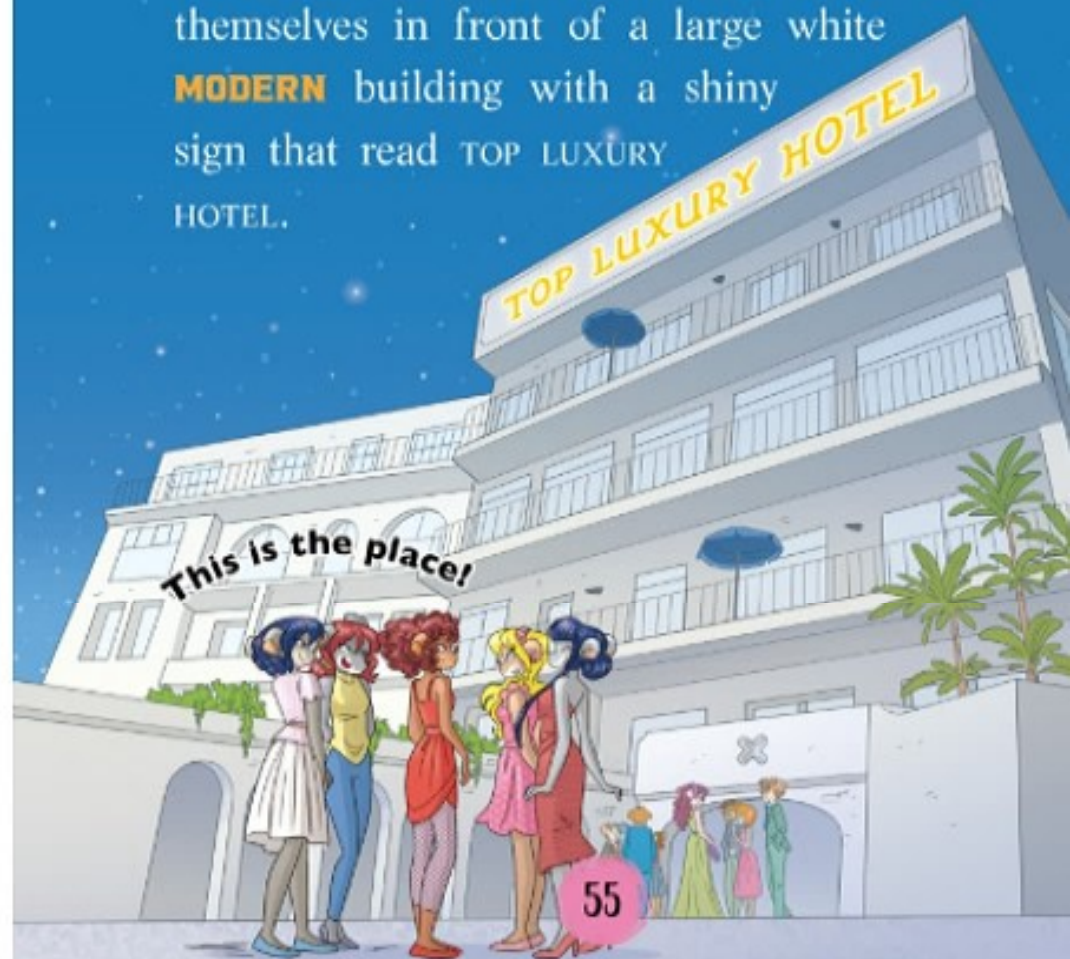
with a heavy sigh. "It would be rude not to show up!"

"Maybe it will go better than we're expecting," Colette said hopefully, starting to look over the ice cream menu. "After all, so far Capri has only been full of . . .

.... GOOD SURPRISES!"

A LUXURIOUS DINNER

Just after eight o'clock, the Thea Sisters left Villa Blue, crossed the street, and found themselves in front of a large white **MODERN** building with a shiny sign that read TOP LUXURY HOTEL.



Before they could step inside, a waiter in an elegant uniform appeared.

Looking them over from snout to tail, he sneered, "If you want to dine at the restaurant, it won't be possible tonight. The dining room is reserved for the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Rodente."

"Actually, they're the ones who invited us," Nicky said, showing him the **inVitations** they'd received that afternoon.

"Oh! I didn't realize," the waiter sputtered. Then he added, much more politely, "In that case, this way, please!"

Following the sounds of loud music, the girls entered a large and super-**fancy** lobby. Ancient statues, paintings, and intricate tapestries were on display beneath tiny spotlights.

"This place is definitely different from Villa Blue," Paulina muttered.

Just then Mr. Rodente popped out from behind the reception desk, wearing an unusual pearl-blue **suit**. "Ah! It's the champions from Seal Island!"

"Actually, we're from Whale Island," Violet corrected him.

"Whales, seals, dolphins . . . they're all just **FISH!**" He laughed.

"Don't you mean *mammals*?" Paulina suggested.

Mr. Rodente rolled his eyes. "Go try the appetizers! And don't miss our **MINI PIZZAS**: They're the best on the island!"

"Well, now things are starting to get interesting," Pamela said, heading to the dining room as fast as her paws would take her.

"I don't even know where to

Here you are!



start!” she cried a moment later, looking at several tables covered in **DISHES** of food.

Just then Colette gasped. “Girls, look who’s down there!”

Seated in a velvet armchair amid the guests was Countess Mousina, with her faithful dog, Ruffy, at her paws. He was devouring **appetizers** from his personalized dog dish.

“I guess they invited her, too?” Nicky said.

“Welcome, girls!” Mrs. Rodente squeaked then, appearing from behind them. “What do you think of our hotel? Isn’t it **INCREDIBLE**? Far better than that rat trap Villa Blue, right?”

“Oh, we don’t —” Violet began, but the woman had already turned away.

“Countess, I hope your little fluffball is enjoying the appetizers!” Mrs. Rodente called.

“Why is she so rude about Simona’s hotel? It’s so **mean**!” Colette whispered.



"I actually prefer Villa Blue over this pompous place," Nicky added, peering around at all the gilded decorations.

"Me too," Violet said. "And what a **WASTE** of food! The guests definitely won't come close to finishing it all."

"That's the beauty of luxury!" Mr. Rodente replied, walking up behind them with a big smile. "After all, this is the **TOP LUXURY HOTEL**. Super luxury makes for a super hotel!"

Just then Countess Mousina got up from her armchair, took her dog in her arms, and walked by, murmuring, "I know, my dear Ruffy, you only eat out of your own **DOG DISH** and no one thought to ask if you wanted it refilled. Let's go to the buffet and see if there's something you'd like!"

Mr. Rodente piped up. "My dear countess,

do you know these five girls? They also have the **misfortune** of staying at Villa Blue."

The countess stuck her snout in the air. "I chose it for the sea view, which is actually remarkable, but otherwise it's a very uncomfortable place. My Ruffy is forced to sleep in a bed made out of a fruit **CRATE**! Even if it's an eco-friendly solution, it certainly isn't as comfortable as his usual featherbed."

Ruffy **GROWLED** at Mr. Rodente, who had stretched out a paw to pet him.

Paulina frowned. "Actually, the staff at Villa Blue has worked really hard to find ecological solutions that are good for the environment."

Mr. Rodente got a sour expression on his snout. "But it's **unacceptable** to expect this adorable pup to sleep in an old fruit crate. I would have prepared a canopy bed for him! You'd like that, wouldn't you, treasure?"

Woof!

He reached out again for the dog, who barked immediately. The countess jerked in surprise, dropping her **purse**. The contents spilled out all over the floor.

“Oh, that’s my fault!” cried Mr. Rodente, hurrying to gather up the objects. “As an apology, I’ll bring you an assortment of **MINI PIZZAS**. I’ll even be sure to put one in your dear pup’s dish!”

“Fine,” the countess huffed. “But please hurry it up.”

A little while later, the lights dimmed and four waiters entered the dining room. They carried an enormous silver platter. On it was a **chocolate** cake decorated with glowing candles.

“Here’s dessert — a Capri specialty, and the

best on the island!” Mrs. Rodente declared proudly.

“How about we skip the dessert and head back to **Villa Blue**?” Paulina suggested quietly to her friends.

“That’s a great idea. I need to get up early tomorrow!” Nicky said.

“Works for me,” Pamela agreed.

Colette looked shocked. “Really? You’re passing up **DESSERT**?”

Pamela shrugged. “To be honest, I can’t wait to get back to Villa Blue. This **TOP LUXURY HOTEL** is a little over-the-top for my taste!”



ISLAND DISCOVERIES

The next morning, while Colette took a sailing lesson with Amerigo and Nicky went to practice, Pamela, Paulina, and Violet decided to **explore** Capri on paw.

“We’ve been walking in the sun for an hour — by the time we reach Villa Jovis, I think I’ll need a nap!” Violet moaned, climbing the path that led to the **archaeological** site of an old Roman palace.

“Come on, we’re almost there,” Pamela encouraged her, spotting the villa in the distance. “Just think, the way back will be all downhill!”

When they reached the entrance at last, Paulina pulled out her tablet and began to

read. “**Villa Jovis** was the final and largest residence of the Roman emperor Tiberius, located in Capri. It was built about two thousand years ago —”

“It’s incredible that it’s been preserved for so long,” Pamela interrupted. “And it looks like an enormous place. Come on, let’s start exploring — I don’t want to risk having to skip lunch!”

The girls wandered through the **RUINS** while Paulina read them facts about the archaeological site from the guide.

“Emperor Tiberius knew exactly what he wanted. He built a villa at the top of a cliff with an extraordinary **view!**” said Violet, admiring the site before them.

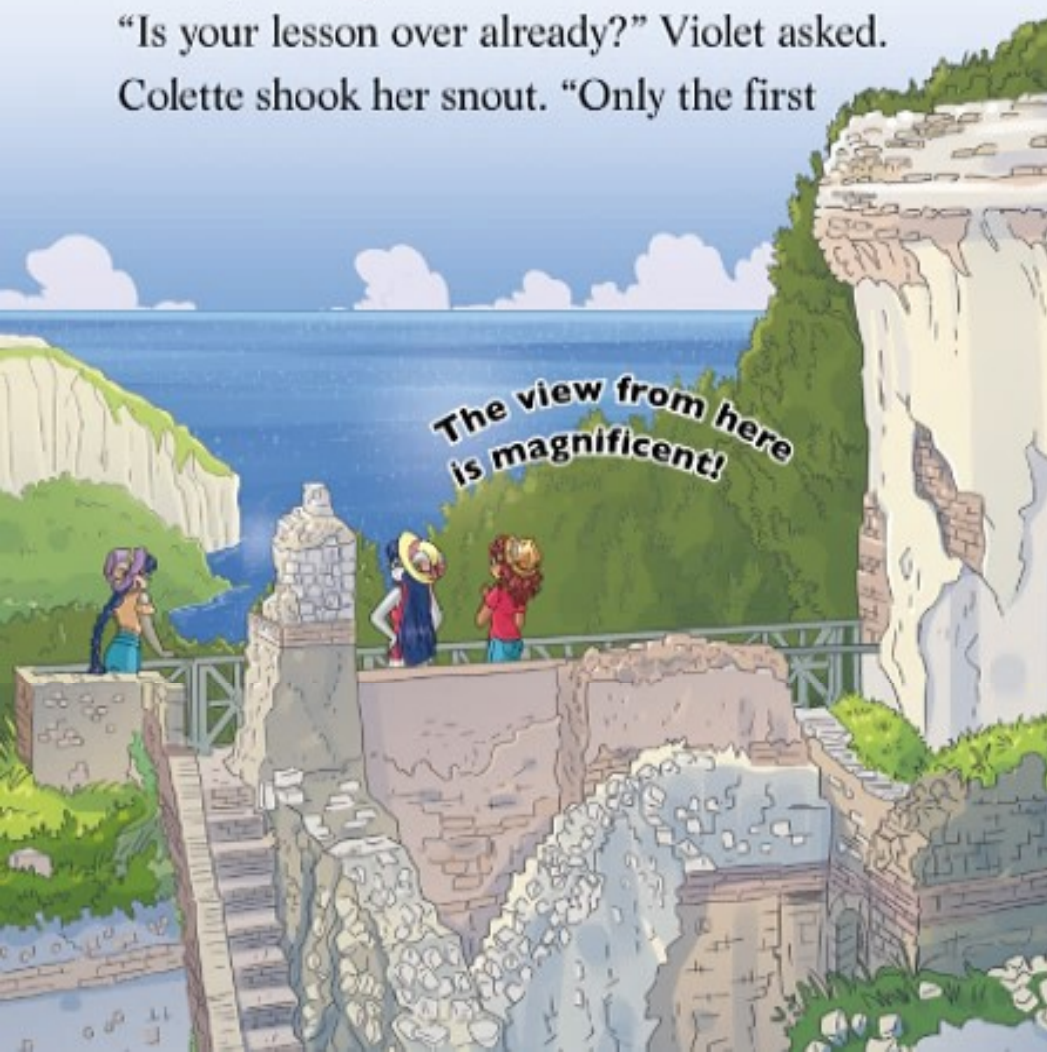
Ding-ding-ding! Ding-ding-ding!

The notification for a video call rang out from Paulina’s tablet.

"It's Coco!" Paulina squeaked, accepting the call.

"Hi, girls!" said Colette, appearing on the display. Her hair was wet, and they could see the sea sparkling behind her.

"Is your lesson over already?" Violet asked. Colette shook her snout. "Only the first



part. Amerigo showed me how to **adjust** the sails, but I haven't learned their names yet!"

"Colette is doing great," Amerigo commented, appearing on the screen.

"It's all thanks to my **teacher**!" she replied. Then she turned back to her friends and added, "We stopped for a break in this cove*! Where are you now?"

"Exploring the ruins of Villa Jovis," Paulina replied. "It's an ancient Roman archaeological site, and it's truly mousetastic!"

Just then Nicky joined the call, her cheeks red from **training**.

"Hey, girls, how are you? I only just saw that you were calling me. I haven't had much time to rest today!"

"Are you ready to **BLOW** everyone away with your rowing?" Pamela asked.

* A cove is a small area on the coastline that's protected from the wind and waves, where boats can be anchored.

Nicky burst out laughing. "You know I'm going to do my best! Unfortunately, I have to get back to it, since this is the last practice before the race. I'll see you all this evening!"

"I have to go, too," Colette said. "It's time to sail the **boat** back to port — or at least try!"

"You can do it, I'm sure of it," Amerigo added with an encouraging smile.

"See you later!" Colette said.

"**Have fun!**" Paulina said before ending the call.

After they finished exploring the ruins and ate lunch in the nearby Astarita Park, Pamela, Violet, and Paulina headed back to Simona's hotel, chattering happily. They never would have **imagined** that, while they were away, something had happened at Villa Blue that would completely change the rest of their vacation . . .





As soon as Violet, Paulina, and Nicky stepped back in the hotel, Colette greeted them, **breathless**. "Girls! You're finally back!"

Pamela frowned. "Coco, are you okay? What's wrong?"

"Did something happen during your lesson with Amerigo?" Violet asked.

Colette shook her snout. "No, that all went well. The **problem** is here at Villa Blue!"

"What happened?" asked Paulina.

Simona walked up to join them. "What happened was —"

"Unforgivable! Unacceptable! Unthinkable!" a sharp voice

Something awful happened!



squeaked, echoing throughout the hotel.

Pamela's eyes widened. "For the love of cheese, who's shouting?!"

Simona continued, sounding worried. "It's **Countess Mousina**. It seems that she's lost her dog's favorite food dish!"

The countess suddenly appeared behind them. "I didn't lose it! I would never dream of losing sight of my sweet Ruffy's precious dog dish!"

WOOF! WOOF! the dog at her paws barked aggressively.

"There, you see?" The countess sighed. "He's so distressed, poor little thing! This morning the dog dish was in our room. Then I went out for a walk, and when I came back, it was gone! If it doesn't reappear before my little treasure's dinnertime, I don't know what I'll do!"

"Please, Countess, stay calm," Simona said. "I assure you that I am personally taking charge of the search. The **DOG DISH** will turn up soon."

"I sincerely hope so! In fact, I demand it!" the countess squeaked. Then she sank into an armchair in the lobby, Ruffy resting calmly on her lap.

Marco came out from behind the reception desk and **whispered** to Simona, "If we have permission, I'd like to search the countess's room."

Simona nodded. "Go ahead." Then she added with a sigh, "Let's hope we find that dog dish quickly, or we're in real **trouble**..."

The Thea Sisters shared a meaningful look. "Could we take a look at the room with Marco?" Colette asked. "We want to help search!"

"And **calm** the countess down," Pamela added.

The girls all glanced over at the woman, who had closed her eyes and was fanning herself, murmuring, "My dear Ruffy! Poor thing, Mommy won't let you down!"

After a moment of hesitation, Simona agreed. "Okay, you can help search. After all, the countess asked us to do everything we could. Thank you for your **help**, girls — I appreciate it!"

"Very well, then. Come with me!" Marco said, heading for the elevator.

The girls followed the concierge to the door of room number 27, which he opened with a spare **K-E-Y**.



"What a mess!" Paulina said, looking around. "It seems like someone was already looking for something in here."

"Maybe it's just the normal **MESS** of a guest on vacation," Violet said. "The door wasn't forced open . . ."

The Thea Sisters and the concierge began searching the room for the **missing** dog dish.



They looked everywhere, even in the bathtub.

Finally, Pamela threw up her paws. "It's not here!"

"Unfortunately, it seems to have **disappeared** into thin air," Marco agreed.

"The dog's name is written on the dish with lots of little **sparkles**, right?" Paulina recalled.



DETECTIVES ON THE CASE

The Thea Sisters were sure of one thing — the missing dog dish was a **mystery**, and they were determined to solve it!

“If the door to the room and the balcony weren’t forced open, the thief probably had a **KEY!**” Colette thought out loud.

Marco shook his snout. “That’s not possible. Copies of all the room keys are kept at the reception desk, under my careful supervision.”

“But the thief somehow managed to access the room easily,” Paulina pondered.

Violet squeaked up. “Is it possible that someone broke in while the room was being **cleaned?**”



“I’d rule that out,” said the concierge. “The countess’s room was cleaned while she ate breakfast. She confirmed that when she went out later, the dog dish was still in its regular spot.”

“Then it seems like the thief found a way to get a **copy** of the key,” Violet continued. “Do you remember what happened at the hotel this morning while the countess was out?”

Marco frowned thoughtfully. “Hmm, let me think. The countess left around ten o’clock, and I saw her return at eleven. At a quarter past ten **Mr. Rodente** came by, just like he always does.”

The girls looked confused, so the concierge explained, “He or his wife come by every day to make us an **OFFER.**”

“Holey cheese! What kind of offer?” Colette asked.

Marco cleared his throat. "The Rodentes are very interested in our sea view. So, every day they offer to **buy** Miss Simona's hotel. What they don't understand is that she'd never leave Villa Blue!"

The girls shared a meaningful look.

Paulina had more questions. "Did anyone arrive after Mr. Rodente?"

"At a quarter to eleven, the young mouse who delivers our fresh fruit came by," Marco said.

"Could he have had access to the countess's room?" asked Violet.

Marco shook his head. "I went with him to the kitchen and helped him unpack the **lemons**. He was only here for a little while, and I was with him the whole time."

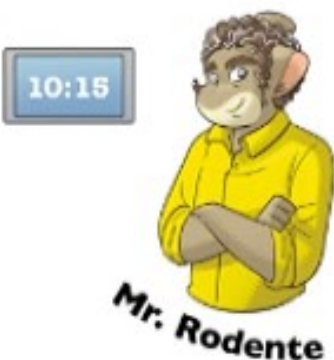
Paulina thought for a moment. "But if you went to the kitchen, that means that the

reception desk was left **UNATTENDED**. That's when the thief could have squeaked in!"

"Do you remember anyone else arriving?" Pamela asked.

"A little after ten thirty I saw the **couple** from room eighteen leave for the day," Marco said. "I don't recall anyone else. It's not tourist season, so we don't have that many guests right now!"

Violet murmured, "So when the countess was out, **NO ONE** unusual came to the reception



desk, but the dog dish disappeared. We must be missing something!”

“What do you think we should do, Vi?” asked Colette.

“It’s time to ask Countess Mousina a few questions,” Violet replied without hesitation.

The girls went back to the lobby, where Simona asked if they had any **updates** about the dog dish.

“Unfortunately, not yet,” replied Paulina. “But we’re starting to think it was stolen.”

Simona’s jaw dropped. “Cheesy creampuffs! A theft at my hotel? That’s not possible!”

“We need to **INVESTIGATE** more to find out what really happened,” Violet replied. “Do you think the countess will agree to answer a few questions?”

“You can try,” Simona said with a small shrug. “She’s out on the **terrace**. A little

while ago I suggested that she sit out there to relax, and I brought her some mandarin orange sorbet.”

The girls joined the **countess**. As soon as she saw them, the countess jumped to her paws and cried, “Did you find my darling dog’s dish?”

“Not yet, but don’t worry — it’s just a matter of time,” Paulina assured her. “In order to track it down, we need your help.”

“Of course! Anything for my darling Ruffy,” the countess said with a **sigh**.

“Could you tell us **exactly** what happened this morning?” Paulina asked.

The countess frowned. “Well, I left around nine, or maybe nine thirty. I don’t really remember . . .”

A theft?!



"The concierge said that he saw you leave at ten," Colette gently suggested. "And the **DOG DISH** was still in your room at that point, right?"

"Very well, ten o'clock, yes," the countess agreed. "And the dog dish was in its place. Before I left, I gave Ruffy his morning snack. My little treasure deserves lots of **snacks**! Right, my love?" She rubbed her cheek against the dog's fur.

"Then you went for a walk?" Pamela prodded her to continue.

The countess nodded. "That's right. Mrs. Rodente had offered to show me the best **STORES** in Capri. We met out front and went shopping."

"How long were you out?" Pamela asked.

"About an hour, but I only bought a pair of sandals," the countess said. "It turned horribly

windy and I decided to come back, even though Mrs. Rodente wanted to show me other stores."

"And when you returned, did you notice anything **unusual**?" asked Paulina.

"No, only that the dog dish was missing! I realized it right away, because it was time for Ruffy's pre-lunch snack," the countess explained.

"Okay. You've been so kind to answer our **questions**. Thank you," Colette said, but Violet chimed in.

"I have one more question," she said. "Before you left your room, do you remember leaving the door to your balcony open?"

The countess didn't hesitate. "Never! I am always very careful." Then she took a deep

The wind!



breath and continued more kindly, "Girls, I'm counting on you. You're my only **hope!**"

CLUE

MARCO LEFT THE RECEPTION DESK FOR A FEW MINUTES TO HELP THE DELIVERY MOUSE. THE THIEF COULD HAVE TAKEN THAT OPPORTUNITY TO BREAK INTO ROOM 27! MEANWHILE, THE COUNTESS IS SURE SHE LEFT THE BALCONY DOOR IN HER ROOM CLOSED. **COULD THE THIEF HAVE ESCAPED THROUGH THERE?**

A STRANGE SWIMMER



That night, Nicky returned to Villa Blue in some light drizzle, just in time for dinner. When she reached the dining room, she noticed right away that the atmosphere wasn't as **cheerful** as usual.

"Girls, is everything okay?" she asked her friends as she sat down at their table. "Did something happen, or are you feeling gloomy because it's raining?"

Colette sighed. "Unfortunately, that's not it. We had a little **problem** today. You remember Countess Mousina, who we saw at the Top Luxury Hotel event?"

"The woman with the dressed-up dog? Of course! It's hard to forget that pair. But I don't

see her here tonight,” Nicky replied, peering around the room.

“She ordered room service in her **new suite**. She insisted on changing rooms, because someone broke into her room this morning and took her beloved dog’s food dish,” Paulina explained.

Nicky looked shocked. “Are you sure?”

“Yes!” Pamela confirmed. “This morning, the countess left at ten for a walk. And when she came back at eleven, bye-bye, dog dish! But the strangest thing is that all her jewelry was still right where she left it.”

“That is really **strange**,” Nicky said. “But to be honest, if all that’s missing is the dog dish, that doesn’t seem like a big deal. Can’t she just buy a new one?”

Violet shook her snout. “It’s not that simple. Ruffy will only eat out of the dish that was

stolen. So now the countess is threatening to make Simona **close** the hotel if it isn’t found!”

“Oh, rats! Poor Simona,” Nicky said.

“We offered to help look for the dog dish,” Colette continued. “But you shouldn’t worry about that. You have a **RACE** to think about! We’ll figure this out.”

“Oh, I can still be helpful,” Nicky replied. “Tell me every last detail of what you’ve uncovered so far!”

As they discussed the mystery of the missing dog dish, dinner went by in the twitch of a whisker. Then the five friends headed back to their room, tired from their long, **EVENTFUL** day.

As the other girls climbed into bed, Paulina closed the shutters to their balcony. “Before we leave, we absolutely have to swim in the **COVE** down there,” she commented. “Every time I go by, I just want to jump in!”

Nicky turned on the lamp and cried, "Oh, girls, I just remembered a **really strange** thing that happened today!"

"Shhh! You'll wake all of Villa Blue!" Pamela whispered.

Colette took off her sleeping mask. "**What happened?**"

"During training this morning, around eleven, I was **rowing** along the coast below



the hotel," Nicky said. "I noticed someone swimming in the distance. Normally, I wouldn't have thought twice about it. But the strange thing was . . . they were fully dressed!"

"**Fully dressed?**" asked Pamela. "Are you sure they weren't just wearing a wet suit?"

"That's what I thought at first, but it seemed more like a sweater or maybe a life jacket," Nicky said. "I just thought it was silly at first. I didn't really think much of it until now! Do you think it could have had something to do with the **missing** dog dish?"

"It's a little strange, for sure, but I'm not sure the two things are connected," Colette reflected.

"What do you think, Vi?" Paulette asked. "Vi?"

"She's sleeping like a rock!" Pamela giggled. "I'd say that —" **YAWN!** "— we should

think about it tomorrow,” Colette concluded. Then all five friends fell into a deep sleep.

CLUE

NICKY SAW A MYSTERIOUS
SWIMMER IN THE WATER
NEAR THE HOTEL —
AT EXACTLY THE SAME
TIME THAT THE COUNTESS
RETURNED TO VILLA
BLUE!

PLOT TWIST



The next morning, the Thea Sisters woke up bright and early and headed to the terrace for breakfast.

As she buttered a piece of **toast**, Violet asked her friends, “What were you all chatting about right before we went to sleep last night? I was really trying to pay attention, but I had such a long day yesterday. I was so tired, I just fell asleep!”

“Nothing gets by you, sister — not even a yawn or a **snore**!” Pamela giggled.

Nicky explained, “I was telling the others that, just around the time when Ruffy’s dog dish went missing yesterday morning, I saw someone swimming in a strange shirt . . . in

the water right in front of the hotel!”

“It might not mean anything, but who knows?” Paulina added.

“**Good morning, girls!**” a familiar voice called out.

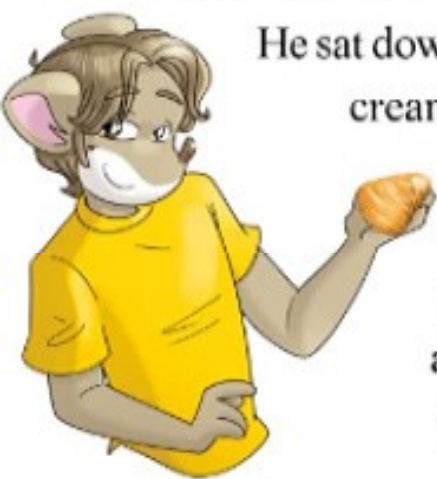
“Hi, Amerigo! What are you doing here?” asked Colette, beaming.

“I brought a couple of German tourists to the hotel,” Amerigo said. “Since it’s breakfast time, I thought I’d stop here for a **pastry**.”

“Great idea! Sit with us,” Pamela suggested.

“We have more than enough to share.”

He sat down and bit into a **delicious** cream-filled pastry. Nodding hello to the owner of the hotel, he asked, “What’s going on? Simona seems a bit more **stressed** than usual this morning.”



“Actually . . .” Colette began, but before she could go on, a bellhop interrupted.

“We found the dog dish!”

“What great news!” Paulina said.

“Hooray!” Nicky cheered.

“I knew it couldn’t really have been **stolen**,” Pamela concluded.

Amerigo looked around, confused. “What are you all talking about?”

“Ruffy’s dog dish!” Colette explained. “He’s Countess Mousina’s dog.”

Still **perplexed**, the boy asked, “And you’re excited about . . . a dog dish?”

“It’s a long story,” Simona said with a grin.

Just then the bellhop opened the bundle of fabric he was holding. Inside was a metal **bowl** with a swirl of tiny sparkles forming the name RUFFY.

As soon as she saw it, Simona cried, “That’s

it! Where did you find it?"

The bellhop looked down, cleared his throat, and stuttered, "W-well, the cleaner found it this morning in one of the rooms."

"Really? Which one?" asked Simona, her eyes wide.

"In **MARCO'S** room," the mouse murmured sadly.

For a moment Simona was speechless. Then she managed to say, "Are you sure?"

The bellhop nodded. "Unfortunately, yes."

"But that can't be! Marco isn't a **THIEF!**" Pamela burst out.

Simona shook her head, as if getting rid of a bad thought. "We'll clear all this

up later. Now we must **return** the dog dish to the countess. And I think I know where to find her."



Twenty minutes later, Simona, the Thea Sisters, and Amerigo had walked to the main **SHOPPING** area in the town of Anacapri. Together, they went from store to store looking for Countess Mousina.

"This morning, she told me that she liked to go shopping here to calm her nerves. Oh, there she is!" Simona cried, pointing to a boutique window. Countess Mousina was inside, trying on a **HAT**.

Taking a deep breath, Simona walked into the boutique.

The Thea Sisters and Amerigo watched through the window as the hotel owner returned the dog dish to the countess. Ruffy **leaped** happily around her paws.

At first, the countess lit up with happiness, but her expression quickly changed. She said something to Simona, who looked **worried**.

"What do you think is happening?" asked Colette anxiously.

"I don't know, but it doesn't look good," Violet said.

A few moments later, Simona left the boutique with her head bowed.

"Unfortunately, now we have a new **problem**," she said.

"What? Isn't the countess happy to have the dog dish back?" asked Paulina.

"Yes, but she forced me to tell her where it was." Simona sighed. "Now she's accused me of having a **DISHONEST** staff — and she's asked me to fire Marco. This is exactly what I was afraid of."

"Holey cheese! But that's not right!" Nicky cried.

Amerigo shook his snout. "Marco is the most honest mouse I know. He couldn't have

done this. There must be some other explanation!"

"That's what I was trying to tell her," Simona said. "She said she would give me until sunset to figure it out — and then she's calling the **POLICE!**"



SUSPECT IN YELLOW

While Simona returned to Villa Blue to attend to her guests, the Thea Sisters were determined to figure out what had really happened with the **disappearing** dog dish. Amerigo offered to lend a paw.

“Where do we even start?” Amerigo asked.

Colette looked thoughtful. “All we know is that the dog dish was found in Marco’s room, so we could start there. If we inspect the room, we might find some **CLUES** to give us a new lead!”

“We already have a lead,” Paulina replied. “Remember? Nicky saw that mysterious swimmer around the time of the theft. If you ask me, that’s worth checking out . . .”

The friends decided to **DIVIDE** into two groups: Violet, Pamela, and Colette would go inspect Marco’s room, while the others tried to learn more about the mysterious swimmer.

As he headed back toward the hotel with Paulina and Nicky, Amerigo asked, “Where exactly did you see the **swimmer**?”

“Right below Villa Blue,” Nicky replied.

The boy thought about it. “The only place that can access that part of the sea is the stone staircase. So either the swimmer came by boat — or from **INSIDE** the hotel!”

“I smell a clue. Let’s take a look around there, then,” Paulina suggested.

Once they arrived at Villa Blue, they headed to the back and went down the **staircase** to the rocky cove.

Paulina looked out at the sea. She pointed into the distance and said, “According to Nicky, the



swimmer was over there heading **west**."

"Maybe they were swimming toward Marina Grande," Amerigo suggested.

Nicky looked up toward the hotel. "The balcony of room twenty-seven is up there," she said, pointing to the countess's room. "Vi wondered if the thief could have jumped from the **balcony** to reach the stairs. It looks possible! From here, they could have escaped by sea."

"So, the swimmer that you saw really could have been the **THIEF**!" Paulina cried. "If they were forced to escape, that might explain why they were dressed the way they were!"

"Dressed how?" Amerigo asked.

"They wore something **YELLOW**, maybe a sweater," Paulina said.

"That's a good place to start," the boy said. "We could ask Marco if he noticed someone

dressed like that yesterday morning.”

Paulina took out her phone. “Great idea — let’s call him now!”

Marco was a bit surprised by the girl’s strange question, but was determined to help. After **reflecting** for a moment, he said, “Actually, I do remember that: Mr. Rodente was wearing a bright yellow shirt!”

A NEW CLUE



While their friends investigated the mysterious swimmer, Colette, Pamela, and Violet got permission from Marco to search his room. He insisted that there would be nothing to find.

“Marco was telling the truth. There’s nothing suspicious here,” Pamela concluded after a while.

“That’s what I was expecting,” Violet said. “He said that he never locks the door. Anyone could have **snuck** in here to hide the dog dish and frame him for it — without leaving any evidence.”

“And since his room is so close to the lobby, it would only take a small **distraction** for

someone to get inside!" Colette said.

Violet was examining the hallway outside the room. She noticed a dainty, elegant **HAIRPIN** lying on the floor. "Hmm . . . what's this doing here?"

"Hey, I've seen that before. But where?" Colette murmured to herself.

"What did you say?" Pamela asked.

Her friend looked up. "Sorry! I'm sure that I've seen a hairpin that's **identical** to this one, but I can't remember where!"

"Maybe online, on one of the fashion blogs you read?" Violet wondered.

"No, I saw it in person," Colette mused. "Wait, I've got it! Come with me!" She took off down the hallway without another squeak.

Violet and Pamela shared a **confused** look and followed their friend outside.

"Coco, do you want to explain where we're

going?" asked Violet as they left Villa Blue behind them.

"Well, this hairpin doesn't seem to be too expensive, but it's definitely a **pawmade** piece of jewelry: a unique piece," Colette said.

"If you say so!" Pamela replied, giggling.

Colette nodded. "It has a very specific design, see? It's formed out of a single piece of metal twisted around itself. Now that I think about it, I remember seeing something similar in **Paris** in a delightful little boutique . . ."

"Coco! Can you get to the point, please?" Violet huffed.

"Yes, yes! The point is . . . this!" Colette cried, pointing to a **boutique** right in front of them.

"Romantic Capri," Violet read on the sign.

Colette went on. "The other day after my sailing lesson, on our way back to the hotel,

Amerigo and I passed this boutique. I noticed a hairpin in the window that was very **similar** to this one. Oh, rats! It's not there anymore!"

"Let's go inside and ask about it," Violet suggested. Together, the three friends stepped inside the elegant



shop full of earrings, bracelets, brooches, and hairpins.

"**May I help you?**" the owner asked kindly.

Colette showed her the hairpin. "Actually, yes. Did this come from this boutique?"

The shop owner examined the object and replied, "It sure did. It's called the Pink Butterfly! We've made only **three**, and I sold all of them in the last two weeks."

Violet explained, "We found this one on the floor of our hotel. It seems someone lost it, and it's so beautiful we were hoping to be able to return it to the owner. Do you remember who bought the three hairpins?"

"Why, of course. I keep **records** of all my clients!" the woman said, adjusting her glasses and pulling a large clothbound book from behind the counter. "The first was bought by a Danish tourist who was just about to leave

Capri. That was about two weeks ago. The second was Mrs. Rodente, the mouse who owns Top Luxury Hotel, and the third was a dear boy who teaches at a sailing school."

Colette went **PALE**. "Do you mean . . . Amerigo?"

"Oh yes, that's him!" the owner confirmed.

"Thank you so much for the information. Have a good day!" Violet said, heading out of the shop.

Once outside, the three **friends** immediately started talking all at once.

"If we exclude the Danish tourist who left two weeks ago, that just leaves Mrs. Rodente and . . . Amerigo," Violet summed up.

"One of them must have **dropped** the hairpin while they were hiding the dog dish in Marco's room," Pamela said.

"I — I don't think it could have been



Amerigo!" Colette said with a **sigh**. "He's been so nice to us, and he offered to help figure out who did this."

"Me neither," Violet agreed. "But for the moment, we can't ignore any leads!"

CLUE

THERE ARE
ONLY TWO PEOPLE ON
THE ISLAND WHO BOUGHT THE
PINK BUTTERFLY HAIRPIN: MRS.
RODENTE AND . . . AMERIGO!
THE TWO OF THEM ARE
NOW SUSPECTS.

WHAT IF IT
WAS HIM?

Marco's revelation that he had seen Mr. Rodente wearing a yellow **shirt** the previous morning had jump-started Nicky, Paulina, and Amerigo's investigation.

"It's a very suspicious coincidence," Paulina said, after hanging up with Marco. "Mr. Rodente was one of the few people who came by the **hotel** while the countess was out on a walk, remember?"

"Then he could have been the one who broke into the room and took the dog dish," Amerigo concluded.

"That's right," Paulina agreed. "Maybe he took advantage of the moment when Marco helped the delivery boy. He could have



slipped into the room and snagged the dog dish without anyone seeing a thing!”

Nicky nodded. “He also could have been surprised by the countess’s return and needed to **ESCAPE**. What if he fled from the balcony and had no choice but to **swim** away?”

“That would have been when Nicky saw him,” Amerigo concluded.

“Okay, but I still don’t understand how the dog dish ended up in Marco’s room,” Paulina said, thinking hard.

“Or why the owner of

the Top Luxury Hotel wanted to get **his paws** on something like that in the first place,” Nicky added.

Amerigo raised an eyebrow. “Maybe he wanted to prank the countess? Or maybe the dog did some kind of **damage** to his hotel?”

“Ruffy definitely isn’t a well-behaved pooch,” Nicky said. “But stealing a dog dish out of spite seems over the top.”

“It’s all so strange,” Paulina concluded.

“**Girls!**” a voice called from above. The three friends looked up and saw Colette walking down the stone staircase, waving at them.

Nicky waved back. “Coco! What are you doing here?”

“Did you and the others find something?” Paulina asked.

Colette reached the bottom of the stairs and

Mr. Rodente took advantage of Marco's absence.

When the countess came back early, he was forced to flee!

In a rush, he fled from the balcony and swam away!

grinned at her friends. "Actually, yes. We found an important **CLUE!**"

"Ooh, what? Don't keep us in suspense!" Nicky cried.

"Pam and Violet will explain everything — they're in the **LOBBY**. Right now, I need to talk to Amerigo," Colette said.

Nicky and Paulina shared a surprised look. "Okay," Paulina agreed. "We'll see you back up at the hotel."

Once they were alone, Amerigo **smiled**. "So, what did you want to talk to me about?"

Colette took a deep breath. "Did you put the dog dish in Marco's room?"

"**What?!**" the boy cried in surprise.

"We found a clue that could lead right to you," Colette explained.

"What?" Amerigo repeated. "What are you squeaking about?"

"About this," Colette replied, opening her paw. The **HAIRPIN** lay in the center.

Amerigo's jaw dropped in shock.

"Cheese and crackers, I can't believe it! Was it really you, then?" Colette said, her eyes filling with tears.



Amerigo shook his snout hard. “No way! I was **sailing** with you when the dog dish disappeared, remember?”

Colette looked at him carefully, confused. “Well, I . . . I didn’t think about that. But didn’t you buy a hairpin just like this one at Romantic Capri?”

“Yes, I did,” Amerigo said. “I bought it yesterday, as a gift for someone **special**.”

Colette blushed and stammered, “Oh, okay, that makes sense. I’m sorry, we just had to be sure. Well, it’s a beautiful gift. I’m sure they will love it.”

Amerigo looked her right in the eyes. “You tell me, since you’re the special mouse I bought it for!”

Colette’s cheeks turned **bright** red. She was squeakless!

Amerigo burst out laughing. “Looks like I

revealed a clue you weren’t expecting, Detective Colette!”

“You’re right,” she replied, melting like a puddle of warm Brie. “But that makes me so happy!”

Amerigo grinned back. “When you pointed the hairpin out in the window of that boutique, I noticed how much you liked it. I went back and bought it as a **gift** for you. I don’t know anything about the hairpin that was found outside Marco’s room, but I guarantee that the one I bought for you is safe aboard the *Naiad*. I was waiting for just the right moment to give it to you!”

Colette was so relieved. “I knew in my heart that you didn’t have anything to do with the theft. And this is just a . . .

... **HAPPY EXTRA SURPRISE!**

PUTTING TOGETHER THE CLUES

When she had learned that the two possible owners of the hairpin left outside Marco's room were Mrs. Rodente and Amerigo, Colette had decided to confront the sailing **instructor** right away. She had hoped that the boy had nothing to do with the stolen dog dish — and thankfully she was right!

Violet and Pamela, meanwhile, thought they should **talk to** the one rodent who knew everything about the comings and goings of the hotel: the concierge.

"Excuse me, but could we ask you a question?" Violet asked Marco, walking up to the reception desk at Villa Blue.

"**You too?**" he asked. He had just spoken

to Paulina on the phone about Mr. Rodente's shirt. "Are you hoping for more **fashion** details about the hotel's visitors? Let's hear your question!"

Pamela laughed. "Nah, we already have Colette for fashion details!"

Violet got right to the point. "We wanted to know if Amerigo or Mrs. Rodente came by the hotel early **this morning**, before the dog dish was found."



After thinking for a moment, Marco replied, "He didn't — he came later, around breakfast time. But she was here early this morning."

The **friends** shared a pointed look. It seemed like they were finally getting to the heart of the mystery!

"Are you sure? The owner of the Top Luxury Hotel was here?" Violet asked again.

Marco explained, "Yes, the Rodentes are very **interested** in our hotel, and they ask to buy it almost every day. This morning, it was the lady's turn. She came by and made her usual **OFFER**."

"And she didn't do anything out of the ordinary?" Pamela asked.

"Nothing unusual," Marco replied. "Although she was a little unsettled because she thought she'd seen a wasp nest under the pergola."

Violet clapped a paw over her mouth. "A wasp nest? Did you go **CHECK** on it?"

The concierge nodded. "Of course — it would have been a danger to our guests! She was so scared that she didn't even want to show me where it was, so I went to see for myself. I took the stepladder and checked the entire **pergola**! Luckily, it was just a false alarm."



"Thank you, that was very helpful!" Pamela said after Marco finished his story.

"No problem, my dear," the concierge replied.

"Just one more thing," Violet added. "Could you give us the **K-E-Y** to the room where the countess had been staying?"

"Certainly," Marco said. "Miss Simona told me to help you with your investigation. I appreciate everything that you're doing for Villa Blue — and for me. I love this place, and I love my job." He placed the key in Violet's outstretched paw.

As soon as they got into the **ELEVATOR**, the girls started squeaking a mile a minute.

"I'm pawsitive it was her!" Pamela cried.

Violet shook her snout. "We don't know anything for sure . . ."

"Isn't it obvious?" All the clues point to Mrs.

Rodente," Pamela said. "She was here before the dog dish was found in Marco's room, and the hairpin we found was hers."

"Yes, true," said Violet. "And she might have lied about the **WASP** nest to distract Marco so she could hide the dog dish without him realizing it. It all adds up — but there's one big problem. A detail that gives her an airtight **alibi**."

"What do you mean?" Pamela cried. "Oh, wait! When the theft happened, Mrs. Rodente was **WALKING** with the countess, so she couldn't have stolen the dish! But then . . . who did?"

Just then the elevator doors opened and Violet stepped into the hallway that led to **ROOM 27**. Pamela noticed a determined look in her eyes as she followed her friend.

Once they reached the room, Violet said,

“This is why I asked for the key to the room where the theft happened. We just have to take another look. I’m sure we **missed** something!”

THE MISSING CLUE



Violet opened the door to the room.

“What are we looking for?” Pamela asked, looking around carefully.

The noblewoman had taken only the necessities to her new suite. Several of her dog’s **accessories** were still in this room.

“We’re looking for any kind of clue that we might have missed,” Violet replied.

Pamela sighed. “Crusty cat litter! But we already **searched** this place from top to bottom — and we even had Marco’s help!”

They started listing everything they saw around the room. “Dog outfits, **jeweled** collars, dog beds, toys,” Pamela said. “We could open a store for dog lovers, but that’s

person who hid the dog dish in Marco's room was Mrs. Rodente!"

Guilty or not?



MR. RODENTE

"Even though she wasn't the one who **stole** it, since she was out with the countess at the time of the theft," Violet said.

Pamela spoke up again. "What a mess — they could both be guilty!"

Violet snapped her fingers. "That's it, Pam! You just solved the case! It's not Mr. Rodente who's guilty, and it's not Mrs. Rodente! They're **both** guilty!"

"Holey cheese!" Paulina cried. "Mr. Rodente took the dog dish and swam away, and his wife came back the next day

Guilty or not?



MRS. RODENTE

and hid it in Marco's room. They **plotted** the whole thing together!"

"But why?" Colette asked.

"I'm not sure," Pamela said. "But now we can prove that Marco had nothing to do with it — and save **Villa Blue**!"

"Are you sure we can do that?" Amerigo asked.

Pamela looked at him, confused. "What do you mean?"

"He means that we don't have solid proof that it was the Rodentes," Paulina said with a sigh. "And he's right, unfortunately. A colorful shirt and a hairpin aren't enough to **accuse** them!"

"That's what I thought, too," Violet added. "But just before you came in, I noticed a detail that we hadn't seen earlier. It might be the **evidence** we've been missing!"

She held out her paw and showed her friends a key.

"I found this on the balcony. I'm pretty sure that it opens this door," she declared, walking over to the door and slipping it into the keyhole.

The lock **sprang** open.

"But what does this prove?" Amerigo asked. "Couldn't the countess have left it there?"

"I don't think so. It's different from the other hotel keys," Violet said, **comparing** the key to the one Marco had just given them. "Take a look."

Amerigo and the girls drew closer and examined the **K-E-Y** carefully. A small logo was engraved at the top of the key.

"It says 'TLH,' which stands for . . ." Colette began.

"... **Top 'Luxury Hotel!**" Violet finished.



"The Rodentes' hotel!" cried Pamela. "This is our proof!"

"But why is a different hotel's logo on a Villa Blue key?" Amerigo asked.



"It's so *strange*. Maybe those letters could mean something else?"

"We need to investigate," Violet declared. "Don't worry, I have a plan!"

SUMMARY OF CLUES

1. The morning of the theft, Mrs. Rodente led the countess away from Villa Blue. While they were gone, Mr. Rodente broke into room 27 and stole the dog dish.
2. The countess returned earlier than expected. Mr. Rodente hurried out onto the balcony and escaped into the water. In his rush, the key he'd used to get into the room must have fallen out of his pocket.
3. The next day, Mrs. Rodente returned to Villa Blue, distracted Marco, and hid the dog dish in his room. She accidentally dropped her hairpin in the hallway.
4. Marco was wrongly accused of the theft!



A SMALL REQUEST

The rest of the Thea Sisters followed Violet out of room 27. Amerigo hesitated for a moment and said, “I have a sailing lesson in a little bit, so unfortunately I have to go.” Then he added with a smile, “But it seems like you’ve made **great progress!** I can’t wait to hear what happens next.”

“Go on, don’t worry,” Colette assured him. “We’ll keep you posted!”

As Amerigo headed off, Violet took a deep breath. “I think I know how we can finish this **INVESTIGATION**. I just need to confirm something with the Rodentes. Do you all want to come with me?”

Her friends agreed immediately. The group

left Villa Blue and headed across the street to the Top Luxury Hotel. When they reached the **LOBBY**, Mr. Rodente greeted them with his usual enthusiasm.

“What fine breeze has blown you this way, girls?” he asked. “Have you finally decided to switch hotels? Very good, very good!”

“Actually —” Nicky began.

But the hotel owner interrupted her. “I can give you a **suite** so lavishly decorated that you’ll forget all about that rat trap, Villa Blue, in the twitch of a tail!” Unleashing a dazzling smile, he added, “And I will send up some room service. Remember, Top Luxury: Super luxury makes for a **super hotel!**”

“Thanks, that’s very kind, but we don’t need any of that,” Colette replied politely.

Mr. Rodente tried again. “Then would you like to reserve a **TABLE** for dinner? Our

buffet impressed you, didn't it? The sad, healthy cuisine from that dump across the street doesn't even compare!"

Paulina shook her snout. "To be honest, no. We're not interested in **dinner**, either."

The hotel owner scratched his snout. "Oh, I know! You're here for our house specialty!" With that, he pulled a small platter of **MINI PIZZAS** out from behind the reception desk. "Yes, yes, these are exceptional. Please help yourselves!"

This time, it was Violet who said, "Thank you, but we're here for another reason."

Violet took the **K·E·Y** from room 5 at Villa Blue from her pocket — the room she and the other Thea Sisters shared. "We need a **copy** of the key to our room. Since they don't have extra keys at our hotel, we wondered if you might be able to make one."

The others shared a look of **confusion**. This had not been a part of the plan. What was Violet trying to do?

Mr. Rodente, meanwhile, puffed up his chest and proudly replied, "Why not! We are super **organized**, unlike that Simona — so unprepared! Give me the key, my dear, and I



will immediately provide you with one or even two copies, no charge, since you'll most certainly spend your next trip to Capri here!"

With that, he took the key and disappeared into a small **ROOM** behind the reception desk.

"I see what you're doing, Vi!" Paulina whispered as soon as she was sure that Mr. Rodente was out of earshot. "You're trying to see if —"

Before she could finish her sentence, the owner reappeared with two freshly made keys in his paw.

"Here you are, my dear! Two **copies** just for you. And please take one of these delicacies, too!" He held out the mini pizzas again.

"Well, if you insist . . ." said Pamela, grabbing one of the snacks.

Meanwhile, Violet took a quick look at the **KEYS** and showed her friends.



At the top of each key was a small logo with the letters *TLH*. They were the same letters **engraved** on the key left behind in the countess's room!

"Just as I thought," she whispered. "Now we can explain everything!"



Mr. Rodente noticed right away that the girls' **expressions** had changed.

"What's going on, dears? Do you need another key? It's no trouble!" he said with another one of his dazzling smiles.

Violet shook her head. "The ones we have are more than enough to show that the Top Luxury Hotel is behind the mystery of the missing dog dish!"

Mr. Rodente's face **darkened**, but he quickly recovered. "I don't know what you're talking about, my sweet girl! The only dish I see is the platter of mini pizzas."

"Enough of these games," Nicky said firmly. "It's your fault that Simona might

have to close the beloved Villa Blue.”

“Why would that be a problem? It’s time for Capri to be free of that **zero-star** establishment,” Mr. Rodente scoffed.

“That was your plan all along, wasn’t it?” Nicky continued. “You engineered all this to make your rival hotel look bad!”

Mr. Rodente’s voice suddenly turned **icy**. “It appears that you’ve had a little too much sun. Now, if you’re finished with this silly chattering, I have a hotel to run!”

Violet wasn’t finished yet. “It took us a little while to figure out **exactly** how you made the dog dish disappear. In the end, there was only one detail that we hadn’t quite nailed down — how did you get into the countess’s room if the key was safe at the reception desk? But then we found a **K-E-Y** with the logo of your hotel in that same room, and it all became clear!”

Violet smiled and went on. “I remembered that you were the one who **helped** Countess Mousina gather up her purse after it spilled during dinner. You took that opportunity to grab the key to her room, make a **copy**, and put it back in her purse later without the countess noticing! The next morning, while your wife lured the countess away from the



hotel to go shopping, you were able to enter her room **undisturbed**."

Just then Mrs. Rodente appeared in the Top Luxury Hotel lobby.

"What are you squeaking about?" she snapped.

"We were explaining how we learned the **truth** about the theft you committed," Colette replied.

Mr. Rodente sneered at them. "You have wild imaginations, girls, but you have no proof."

"Actually, we do have proof: the **HAIRPIN** that you lost outside Marco's room, and the key with the Top Luxury Hotel logo found on the balcony of the countess's room," Violet summed up, showing them the **K-E-Y**.

We caught you!



"You cheesebrain!" Mrs. Rodente squeaked shrilly, turning to her husband. "How could you lose that?"

"What about your hairpin?" her husband snapped back.

The Thea Sisters shared a look of satisfaction. The couple were **BETRAYING** each other with their arguing!

"At this point, you can't deny it," Paulina said.

Mr. Rodente looked flustered. "The fact that someone entered that room with a copied key doesn't prove anything. The **THIEF** is Marco, and everyone knows it!"

"Yes, it was him," Mrs. Rodente echoed. "The dog dish was found in his room!"

Paulina shook her head calmly. "The truth is, you two thought you could stage a **theft** in Countess Mousina's room so she would get

angry and point paws at the staff of Villa Blue. So yesterday morning, Mr. Rodente went to the hotel to make his usual offer to buy it. When Marco was called away from the **reception** desk to help the delivery boy, Mr. Rodente slipped into room twenty-seven with the key he had copied the night before. He took the dog dish, and when he heard the countess coming back, he **FLED** from the balcony, dropping the key. Then he jumped into the sea, where Nicky noticed him swimming away!

“This morning, it was Mrs. Rodente’s turn. She brought the dog dish to Villa Blue and hid it in the concierge’s room — making him the prime **suspect**.”

“It was all her idea!” Mr. Rodente burst out, pointing at his wife. “She said, ‘Come on, it will be easy! They’ll go **bankrupt**, we’ll buy

the hotel for pennies, and we’ll take it down!”

“And if it weren’t for your carelessness, I would now be the **owner** of the hotel with the best view in all Capri!” his wife fumed. “If only these five busybodies had just stayed home!”



“Unfortunately for you, you’ve been caught,” Violet said. “And now you’ll come with us to Villa Blue to **explain** everything that happened . . . before it’s too late!”

NINE O’CLOCK ON THE DOT



“You were right, Coco: There’s nothing better than a nice **rose-scented** shower to make you feel like a brand-new mouse!” Paulina said as she left the bathroom, looking relaxed.

“Actually, what’s better is rose-scented shower gel, shampoo, and conditioner . . . and the perfect **hairstyle**!” Colette replied, gently shaking out her long blonde hair, which she had just finished drying.

Pamela rolled her eyes. “Come on! If we all spent an hour doing our hair, we’d never make it to **dinner**.”

“Speaking of dinner, I’m hungry,” Nicky said. “Let’s head down and see what Simona has prepared tonight.”

"That's a marvemouse id —"

Knock knock!

The girls looked surprised. They weren't expecting visitors! When Nicky opened the door, she found Marco holding a silver **TRAY** with a cover.

"Good evening, ladies," he greeted them. "I have a message for you."

He uncovered the tray with a gloved paw, revealing an *elegant* notecard with a gold border that read:

*Please meet me on the
terrace at nine o'clock on the
dot, dressed elegantly.
Simona*

"**Holey cheese**, that's an awfully sophisticated invitation from Simona! Do you know anything else about it, Marco?" Nicky asked.

The concierge nodded with a sly smile, then left without another word.

"*At nine on the dot?*" Colette shrieked, running to the closet. "We need to get ready! Quick, quick, quick!"

A half hour later, the five friends were dressed to perfection in *elegant outfits*, ready to meet Simona.

The terrace looked even more beautiful than usual, lit up with large firepits and draped with plants and colorful flowers.

As soon as they stepped outside, the Thea Sisters were greeted by warm *applause* from Simona, Marco, Amerigo, and the hotel staff, who had all gathered for the occasion.

"Thank you! You saved Villa Blue!" everyone cheered.

Smiling, Simona walked over to them. "I've arranged a small dinner with a menu of Capri **specialties** in your honor, to thank you for all you've done for us. I hope you enjoy the surprise."

"Thank you so much, Simona, but it's not necessary!" Violet said.

"Don't be silly, I insist!" a familiar voice squeaked up.

Turning, the girls saw the countess. She smiled at them. "If it weren't for you, my Ruffy would have stopped **eating**. He's already so skinny, poor little dear!"

The dog barked at her paws.

"We only wanted to get to the truth," Paulina explained. "It didn't seem like Marco would have **stolen** the dog dish."

The countess nodded. "The Rodentes confessed to their horrible plan to ruin this hotel and its concierge. I regret that I believed them — and that I **doubted** Villa Blue."

"Appearances were deceiving," Simona added with a smile.

The countess frowned. "Maybe, but when I make a mistake, I admit to it. And to make up for my error, I've decided to **celebrate** my Ruffy's birthday here next month!"

"I'll be delighted to see you and your lovely dog here again, Countess," Simona replied.

"And don't forget our one hundred and fifty guests!" she added.

"Wh-what?!" Simona stammered.

The countess gathered up Ruffy in a **hug**. "That's the minimum number of guests for such an important party! Right, my little treasure?"



Thank you, girls!

The Thea Sisters burst into giggles. Simona's snout was clearly spinning just thinking about how she'd prepare for such an **event**!

Just then Marco called for everyone's attention. "Ladies and gentlemice, we're about to serve our special Capri **ravioli**!"



Over the past two days, the Thea Sisters had been so **focused** on finding the dog dish thief, clearing Marco's name, and saving Villa Blue that they had almost forgotten why they had come to Capri in the first place: Nicky's **REGATTA**!

"Quick, Coco!" Paulina shouted from the top of the stone staircase that led down to the water. "Amerigo is waiting for us!"

"Coming, coming!" Colette cried, following her friends down to the cove, where Amerigo was ready to set sail.



"There you are! Come on, let's go. The race is about to begin!" Amerigo said.

"Are you sure we'll have a good **view** from the boat?" Pamela asked. "I don't want to miss a single moment of the **RACE**!"

Amerigo grinned. "Don't worry, we'll get as close as possible to the buoys. We'll have a perfect view of the race."

The *Naiad* sailed through the waves until it reached the competition buoys.

"THERE'S NICKY! GOOOO!" shouted Pamela.

Their friend was ready at the starting line with her boat, but she was so focused that she didn't hear the Thea Sisters' cheers.

A few moments later, the referee started the race. The eight rowers from all over the world began to paddle as fast as they could.

"GO, NICKY! COME ON!" the four friends shouted from their boat.

"It looks like she's falling a little behind," Amerigo commented. "Right now, she's in seventh!"

Paulina smiled knowingly. "Nicky is strong and determined. I'm sure she'll catch up."

"She's **PASSING** the French rower right now!" Pamela squeaked. "And she's about to pass two more . . . Go, Nicky!"

"It's the last hundred meters! Go, go, go, go, go, go, gooooo!" Colette cheered.

"It looks like there are four of them tied for the lead. They're all going the same speed," Violet said. "They're coming up on the finish line . . . Nicky is **SECOND**!"

"Hooray!" Pamela cheered, jumping up and down and causing the *Naiad* to rock back and forth.

"Um, easy does it!" Amerigo laughed as the girls hugged one another.

Nicky noticed the boat and started to paddle over to her friends.

"She's coming this way. Come on, let's go meet her!" Paulina shouted, **JUMPING** into the water.

The others didn't hesitate to follow, laughing all the way.



"**You were fantastic!**" they cheered.

"I would have liked to **WIN**, but Rosa really deserved first place," Nicky said, beaming.

"What an exciting race!" Colette cried, swimming up to her.

"Not as exciting as seeing you ruin your hairdo by jumping into the water," Nicky said with a giggle.

Colette laughed. "Anything for a **friend!**"

The Thea Sisters and Amerigo spent the rest of the afternoon on the water, swimming, chatting, and having fun until the sun began to set.

Looking up at the orange-streaked sky, Amerigo asked Colette to join him at the prow.*

Amerigo took her by the paw and passed her a **beach towel**.

"Thank you, my hair is soaked!" She

* The prow is the area at the front of a boat.

laughed. "I must look like Ruffy after a bath."

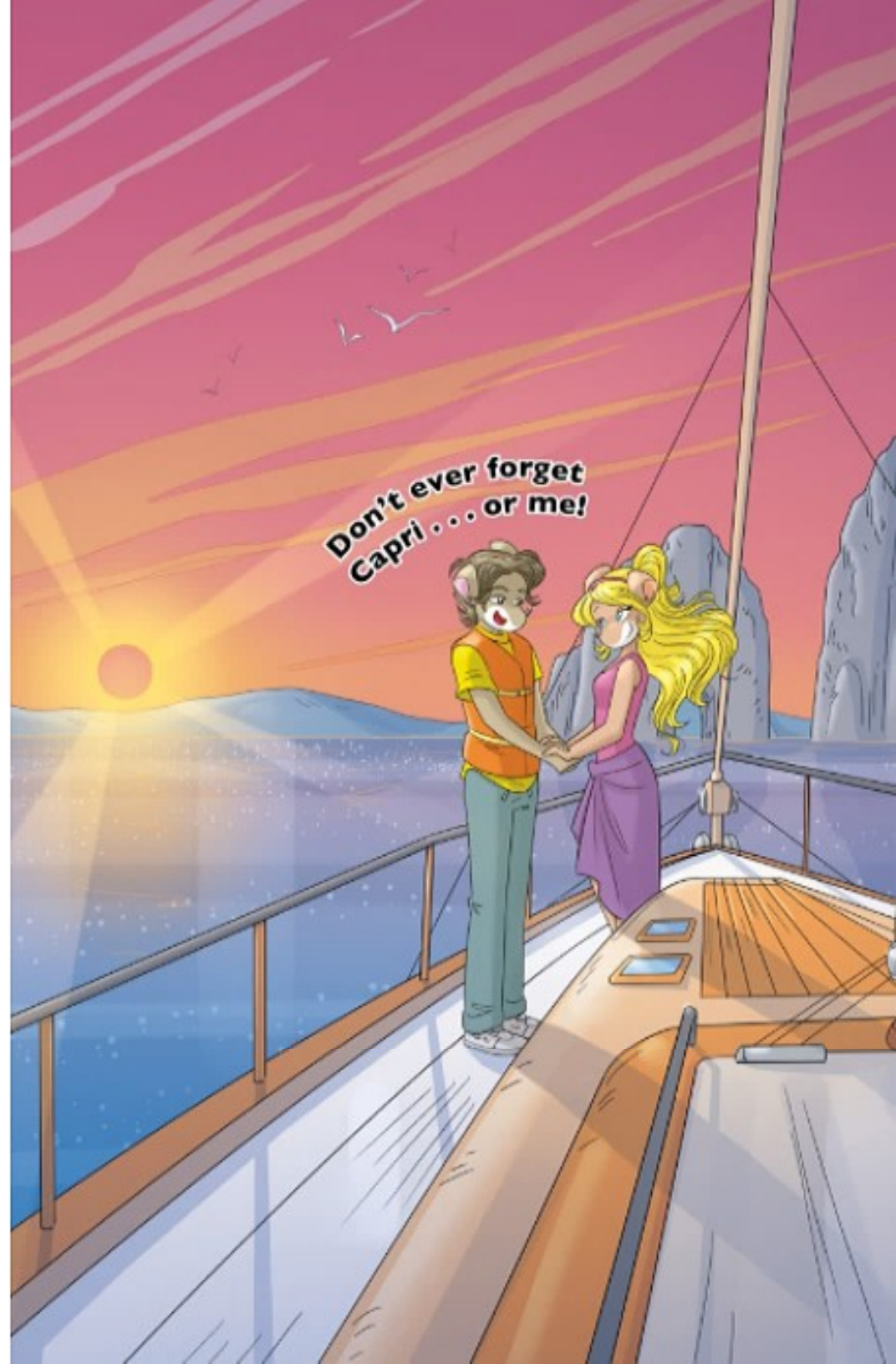
As soon as Colette finished drying off, Amerigo said, "Unfortunately, your investigation **RUINED** the surprise I had in mind."

With that, the boy pulled a small box from his pocket and pawed it to her. Colette looked down, surprised, as he continued, "I said that I wanted to give you a small **gift** — and this is it. I hope it helps you always remember this island . . . and me."

Colette smiled and opened the box.

"The hairpin! Thank you, I love it!" Looking up, she added, "But I don't need it to remember this trip, or our **friendship**. I could never forget these past few days."

Amerigo smiled. Then he looked out at the waves lapping against his beloved *Naiad*. "Who knows, maybe one day the **sea** will



take me all the way to Whale Island.”

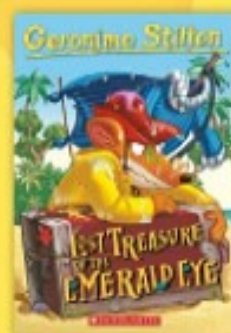
“And I’ll be there to welcome you!” Colette said.

Holding paws, the pair looked out at the **HORIZON**, where the sea was sparkling . . .

... WITH THE
LIGHT OF SWEET
PROMISES!



**Don't miss a single
fabumouse adventure!**



- | | |
|--|---|
| ■ #1 Lost Treasure of the Emerald Eye | ■ #16 A Cheese-Colored Camper |
| ■ #2 The Curse of the Cheese Pyramid | ■ #17 Watch Your Whiskers, Stilton! |
| ■ #3 Cat and Mouse in a Haunted House | ■ #18 Shipwreck on the Pirate Islands |
| ■ #4 I'm Too Fond of My Fur! | ■ #19 My Name Is Stilton, Geronimo Stilton! |
| ■ #5 Four Mice Deep in the Jungle | ■ #20 Surf's Up, Geronimo! |
| ■ #6 Paws Off, Cheddarface! | ■ #21 The Wild, Wild West |
| ■ #7 Red Pizzas for a Blue Count | ■ #22 The Secret of Cacklefur Castle |
| ■ #8 Attack of the Bandit Cats | ■ A Christmas Tale |
| ■ #9 A Fabumouse Vacation for Geronimo | ■ #23 Valentine's Day Disaster |
| ■ #10 All Because of a Cup of Coffee | ■ #24 Field Trip to Niagara Falls |
| ■ #11 It's Halloween, You 'Fraidy Mouse! | ■ #25 The Search for Sunken Treasure |
| ■ #12 Merry Christmas, Geronimo! | ■ #26 The Mummy with No Name |
| ■ #13 The Phantom of the Subway | ■ #27 The Christmas Toy Factory |
| ■ #14 The Temple of the Ruby of Fire | ■ #28 Wedding Crasher |
| ■ #15 The Mona Mousa Code | ■ #29 Down and Out Down Under |